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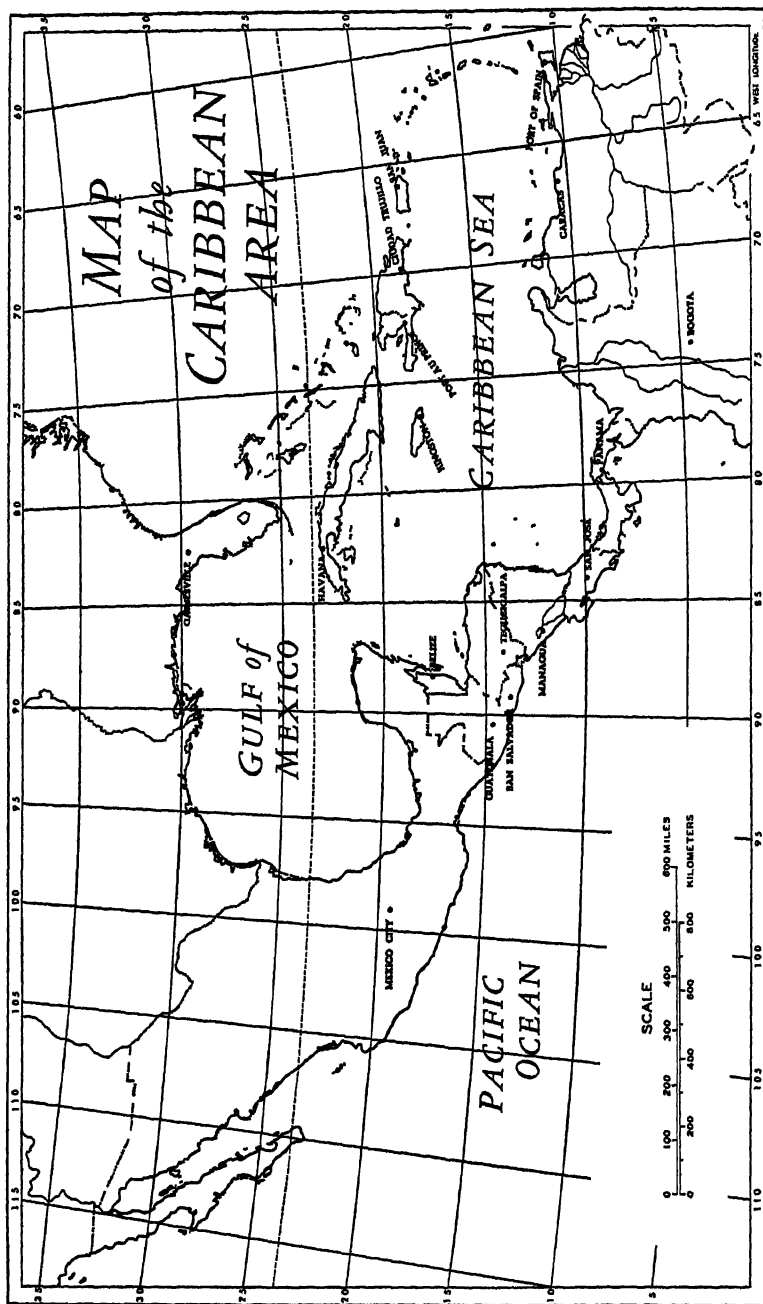
The  
CARIBBEAN  
at MID-CENTURY

SERIES ONE

VOLUME I

A publication of the  
SCHOOL OF INTER-AMERICAN STUDIES

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The  
CARIBBEAN  
at MID-CENTURY

*edited by A. Curtis Wilgus*



1951

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## Foreword

IT IS altogether fitting that the University of Florida should bring together from time to time the great leaders in Latin American affairs, and that it should publish the fruits of their deliberations. For the historical roots of Florida, reaching back to the Spanish conquest, are intimately interwoven with those of the island republics and mainland nations which girdle the Caribbean Sea. Florida's future prosperity and security, too, require our continued recognition of this common ancestry.

Upon the soil of this state were established the first settlements made by the conquistadors within the borders of our present-day nation. Though Florida, as a colony, could not rival the fabled riches of Peru and Mexico, her fortified shorelines served Spain as bastions against French, English, and Dutch corsairs who sought to ravish the silver galleons as they sailed through the Bahama Channel. Paradoxically, those same shores provided bases for the marauders in their sallies against the treasure-laden ships of the Spanish Crown. And it reputedly was here, in Florida's off-shore waters, that Jenkins lost the famous ear which gave its name to a war.

Florida's colonial past and the history of the conquest of the Americas share many names of fame—Ponce de León, Pánfilo de Narváez, Hernando de Soto, Menéndez de Avilés. In ancient St. Augustine, still historically unspoiled, lies North America's finest monument to our Spanish past: the stout fortress of Castillo de San Marcos.

What better place, then, than the campus of the University of Florida for men of learning to exchange views about "The Caribbean at Mid-Century"? What better vantage point from which to review the fifty years just closed, and from which to peer ahead into the half-century to come.

The University of Florida long has been conscious of its rich heritage, and of its concomitant responsibility to cultivate inter-

American understanding through education. Formally, our program began over a generation ago when, in 1930, the University's Institute of Inter-American Affairs was born. The guiding principle of this program, whether it finds expression in conferences, graduate or undergraduate curricula, research, or publications, is the same today as always: to help the peoples of all the Americas to know one another better, and thus to live together in greater harmony.

In the two decades following establishment of the institute, interest in Latin American studies mushroomed so dramatically that our inter-American program was forced to grow. Through the years, new courses were added, and area specialists were invited to join our staff. Another significant milestone was reached in September, 1950, when our graduate School of Inter-American Studies was formed, under the able leadership of Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus, eminent historian and educator of wide renown in Hispanic-American affairs. Today, thanks to greatly expanded curricula and to the excellence of instruction now available from our enlarged staff of area experts, students may enroll for Latin American studies leading to the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in many fields. Rich course offerings also are available on the undergraduate level.

Because of Florida's subtropical climate, students from many Latin American countries find the University's courses in agriculture, animal industry, soil science, and other technical fields especially applicable in solving problems encountered in their homelands. At the time of the conference, 102 students from 14 Latin American nations were enrolled at the University, 84 of whom were receiving scholarship aid. Latin American alumni today number over 300.

In the area of research and publications, our library holdings of Latin American materials are being enlarged steadily. Our University Press is embarked on a noteworthy schedule of area publications, and soon will release several new titles, including Volume 14 of *The Handbook of Latin American Studies*. A contract for publication of this indispensable tool of scholarship, until now published by Harvard University Press, recently was awarded to our Press by the Library of Congress.

Architect's plans already have been prepared for a proposed

Inter-American House, which will occupy a site rich in historical significance. The University campus occupies part of a grant of some 200,000 acres made by King Ferdinand VII of Spain to the Spanish grandee, Don Fernando de la Maza Arredondo. A key location on the campus has been set aside for the School of Inter-American Studies and all related activities, including conferences.

The inter-American program of the University of Florida is our answer to those who would divide to conquer, to those who would despair of peace among men in our times. True, the area we have pledged to serve is but a segment of what we hope and pray will be a united world. But it is an important segment. It is a segment we can comprehend, and to which we can realistically hope to make a vital contribution.

This conference on "The Caribbean at Mid-Century" and others which will follow should aid materially in the task of translating these hopes into realities.

J. HILLIS MILLER, *President*

University of Florida



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# Introduction

## I

THE Caribbean area! What visions are brought to mind when the name is mentioned! For where else in the world can one find such thrilling and exciting romance, so much mingled fact and fancy, so many historical ghosts? The Caribbean was the first focal point for Europe in America. It was the site of the first European government in this Hemisphere. It was the scene of stupendous feats of bravery, of fierce and bloody massacres, and of the blackest crimes in the long story of man's inhumanity to man. It was once peopled by natives who erected the highest civilization in the continent while at the same time it was inhabited by some of the most warlike cannibals known.

The Caribbean area is an historical stage upon which have played some of the best and some of the worst actors in recorded history. It was a *mare clausum*, the property of the Spanish Crown, yet it could not be defended successfully against pirates, freebooters, buccaneers, and the "legal" attacks from numerous nations of Europe, some of which still maintain more or less precarious footholds. It was partially conquered and settled within a generation after Columbus' discovery, yet it has not been completely "civilized" to the present day.

The Caribbean is a geographical unit which has never been unified. It contains some of America's warmest lowlands and some of the coldest uplands. It has some of the wettest tropical regions and a few exceedingly dry areas. It has regions of productive abundance and areas of agricultural scarcity. In some places there is pleasant prosperity while in others there is dismal poverty. Overcrowding or underpopulation mark many regions. It has a few good harbors and many poor ones. It includes numerous islands, peninsulas, and large land masses, and there are at least seven possible inter-ocean canal routes between the east and west which might connect, yet separate, the adjacent regions.

The Caribbean area is populated today by representatives of the white, red, black, and yellow races, with a few from the brown race. These people speak innumerable dialects and many of the languages of Europe and Asia. Their governments are among the most democratic and the most dictatorial and despotic in the Western Hemisphere.

The Caribbean area is truly a land of many contrasts as well as of numerable similarities. It is a unit on the earth's surface held together, yet separated, by the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico—first a "Spanish lake" and later an "American Mediterranean." This is "Middle America." In no other portion of the globe are there at present more numerous or more interesting problems than in this area.

## II

For three centuries before 1800 the Caribbean was the chief European door to America. Through this door in the early years of European expansion came adventurers and traders bent on taking away the riches of the new world. Spain attempted for three hundred years to monopolize this vast wealth by excluding all other powers from legal trade. But this effort only served to call to the attention of covetous nations the importance of the area. In consequence the British and the Dutch in various periods often claimed as large a share of the goods and treasures of the Caribbean as did Spain herself. Finally, near the end of the eighteenth century, the Spanish government decided to recognize the cold facts of reality and to throw open the region, together with her other colonies in the new world, to the free trade of outsiders.

With the rise of the United States, our interest in the Caribbean has increased with our territorial expansion and with our growing international importance as a nation. In the early days of the last century our statesmen, among them Thomas Jefferson and later John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, turned covetous eyes on the area, but without gaining for us actual possessions. Even the slave interests in the South from time to time cast hopeful glances at the Caribbean lands as areas where slavery might be profitably perpetuated if it should be abolished in the United States.

During the Mexican War, "Manifest Destiny" became a watchword throughout the country, and our statesmen and adventurers looked long and longingly on our immediate neighbors to the south. On the supposition that Cuba was the "key to the Gulf," and that nearby islands were necessary to our peace, safety, and prosperity, several of our presidents, as well as cabinet members and Congress members, spoke and wrote with the common objective of bestowing on the lands of the Caribbean the blessings of our God-given civilization.

The war with Spain brought to a culmination nearly a century of anxious longing for the area. As a result, the acquisition of Puerto Rico in 1898 was followed by the forcing of the Platt Amendment upon Cuba, by the control of Panamanian territory for the Canal, by the collection of the customs of the Dominican Republic, and by the sending of Marines into Nicaragua and later into Haiti. These steps brought down upon the United States justified and widespread criticism from Latin Americans, but this did not lead us to modify the methods of Yankee Imperialism, Dollar Diplomacy, and the Big Stick policy until the decade of the nineteen-thirties. For a time the Monroe Doctrine was largely restricted to the Caribbean area, especially in the mind of President Coolidge, but the world had to wait for the Good Neighbor attitude before breathing easier with regard to our Caribbean policy.

Despite the New Deal views concerning our relations to our southern neighbors, conditions during the decade of the Depression and the years of the Second World War afforded sufficient excuse for the United States to develop new policies of economic expediency and strategic necessity so that once again the Caribbean has become not only our inland sea but it is now virtually our front door-step and a bastion of defense.

Thus during the past four and one-half centuries one type of covetous exploitation after another has been applied to the region. Little wealth has been taken into the area, but untold amounts have been taken out, and today the peoples of the Caribbean are probably very little better off economically, and possibly very little happier, than were their forebears in previous centuries. Their problems have changed chiefly in degree rather than in nature. To understand these problems a brief analysis may be helpful.

## III

Caribbean economic problems are rooted in the facts of relative global location and in regional geography. The thirteen Caribbean countries, including Mexico, the six states of Central America, the three states of the West Indies, Puerto Rico, and the two mainland republics of Colombia and Venezuela, have a common water connection in the Caribbean Sea. At first this factor tended to separate them, but it was not long before it became a connecting link between them all. Within the area moves the restless Gulf Stream which has profoundly affected navigation, while blowing over the region are the Trade Winds which have had a decided influence not only on sailing ships but upon the health and social activities of the peoples.

Throughout all the countries bordering on this inland sea are mountainous areas of cold or temperate climate as well as low-lying regions of steaming torrid heat. In some regions volcanoes are active, in all regions earthquakes are of frequent occurrence, and everywhere tropical storms of hurricane velocity may strike unexpectedly. No person is free from the climatic influence, whether it be monotonous or varied, salubrious or unhealthful. The ease of living in an almost changeless climate has made people indolent and strengthened the *Mañana* complex.

In this easy environment people have reproduced themselves prodigiously but nature contrived to kill them off in even larger numbers, at least for three centuries after the arrival of Columbus. In the twentieth century a concerted attempt to improve living conditions, both from within and without the area, gradually brought about a reversal in population trends, and soon overcrowding reduced elbowroom. A once plentiful food supply has declined relatively and has failed to sustain the increasing families, especially in the islands.

Health and sanitation programs, and agricultural and engineering development, have enabled more people to keep alive for more years. More intensive land cultivation hence has become necessary and variation in crops of an edible type has helped to raise living standards. But with this betterment have come wage increases and the cost of living has risen, so that few people are as well off as before.

For centuries the Caribbean Sea was almost a landlocked body of water, a geographical *cul de sac*, which was entered only for the purpose of exploitation. But with the opening of the Panama Canal the region suddenly found itself in the path of the trade of the world. To some extent this gave the region a new interest in the eyes of European peoples, and it helped to give to the people of the Caribbean lands a new concept of their world importance. Certainly it made the people of the United States view the area with greater interest, and it caused our capitalists to seek opportunities to invest their funds in get-rich-quick enterprises. In this they were encouraged by Caribbean political dictators, who, before they were assassinated or overthrown, hoped to perpetuate their names in economic and social good works and to exploit the natural resources for their own financial benefit.

The development of natural resources, especially oil, has brought sudden prosperity to Venezuela and Mexico. The region has become more and more an economic "colonial" area for the United States as we have grown in importance as a world power. The Caribbean area is now an economic door for the United States through which pass Caribbean produce and United States men, money, and machines, until the area has become flooded with Yankee business men and technicians with special skills. This conquest from the north was first controlled, determined, and directed by the "Big Stick" policy and "Dollar Diplomacy" and by the sending of United States Marines to protect the new United States industrial culture taking root in the region and to teach the people how to be honest in their political elections and how to run their unstable governments. Hence much of the Caribbean area became "Americanized" by United States business men who were not above turning a fast dollar in dealings with corrupt governments and unscrupulous dictators.

Many of the agricultural products of the Caribbean area were originally introduced from the outside. Included among these are sugar, bananas, rice, coffee, tobacco, cotton, and rubber. Some few minerals have been exploited and in a few cases nearly exhausted. But with the coming of the Second World War and the threat of a third, some attempts have been made to add new "strategic" raw products to this list.

Trade within the region is largely subordinated to trade with outside areas, especially with the United States, which supplies chiefly manufactured goods while receiving raw products and food-stuffs. Various United States steamship companies have gained carrying monopolies in the area, while airlines compete for the tourist trade. In many of the countries interior transportation by highway and railroad is often uneconomical and hazardous, or even impossible, and the development of national economic life in consequence has been retarded.

National wealth has been developed in the Caribbean countries, but not without political repercussions and frequent national upheavals. A new age of "Manifest Destiny" for the United States has arrived. The Caribbean nations now realize that their very existence depends upon the whims of the great neighbor to the north who is dividing and conquering them one by one with economic pressures and exploitations. It has not taken these countries long to conclude that they can not get along either with United States' or without United States' markets and technology.

In some instances, governments have been unable to put their own financial houses in order, and taxes are high, public funds are misspent, and the cost of living is mounting. Foreign loans, chiefly from the United States, are often wasted in graft and in elevating the ego of the dictator in power, while such loans result chiefly in increasing the public debt, which in many countries has often been repudiated and in some instances has been in arrears for decades. Yet each government appears eager to encourage the entrance of foreign capital and to borrow sums from outside sources. A few, with growing national self-reliance, are finally beginning to tug on their economic bootstraps. Particularly is this true in Puerto Rico.

In most of the countries labor problems are virtually insoluble. Almost everywhere labor is exploited by oppression, suppression, and depression. Indian or Negro laborers or both are common throughout the Caribbean, with the white man in most countries owning the land and exploiting the worker. Labor unions in many of the countries are either non-existent or of little national importance, and each laborer must look out for himself and his family as best he can. Fortunately several of the governments of the area are coming to be more concerned with social welfare, and laborers eventually should benefit from this new interest.

The Second World War brought a new vista of economic prosperity to the Caribbean peoples when they were called upon by the United States to aid in the war effort by developing and providing strategic materials. For their cooperation they were granted gifts, loans, favored purchases, and trade agreements, which eventually were to upset their national economies. In consequence, at mid-century the Caribbean area is more than ever a region for economic exploitation by the most powerful nation in the world. The Truman Point-Four doctrine is bringing once again an influx of United States business men and business dollars, with an influence both for good and for bad. At mid-century, however, the Caribbean area seems on the verge of economic revolution which also means political, social, and cultural revolution.

The long cycle of history is slowly turning in the Caribbean. Who can predict the future? A new war will bring new economic problems and new crises and perchance a whole new way of living for a chosen few of the region. But for millions life will go on much as it has in the past half-century.

#### IV

Caribbean social problems are rooted in geographical factors and in racial mixtures. The Caribbean area is one of the chief melting pots of the world, for in this region are found all the races of mankind. Certainly here, if anywhere in Latin America, exists the "Cosmic Race" so well described by José Vasconcelos of Mexico. Here are assembled intermixtures of all colors and all types to form blended physiognomies and confused character traits. In all the countries individuals representing one of the mixtures or one of the pure groups may serve—indeed have served—in prominent political, social, cultural, and economic positions. But the class system has not yet degenerated into the caste system, and intermarriage is not usually frowned upon except by outsiders.

Generally the Cosmic Race is carefree and convivial, impetuous and improvident, living from day to day, and looking forward to *mañana*, which never comes, as the time for all accomplishments. Interests in life are for the moment, and objectives are to be

gained chiefly if they carry with them social prestige or political pre-eminence. Ambition is momentary and transient. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that natives of the Caribbean are content to allow the outsider to exploit the natural resources and to carry away the natural wealth.

Some of the attributes just described are in part the result of an environment which works havoc with health. Among the diseases which have been both endemic and epidemic are yellow fever, malaria, hook worm, dysentery, tuberculosis, and syphilis. Besides, faulty diet among the families along the margin of subsistence keeps thousands in a state of undernourishment and physical weakness. Everywhere in rural districts there are too few doctors and nurses, not to mention a lack of hospital facilities. An inevitable result of this condition is a medical superstition bordering on witchcraft.

## V

Caribbean intellectual problems are rooted in a colonial-like conscience and in religious superstition. From the earliest days of the Spanish conquest intellectual life was controlled by the State and the Church, often working at cross purposes with each other. The rapidity of the Conquest made possible the rapid establishment of some elementary schools for native children and of a few schools of higher learning for whites. The Church from the very beginning benevolently supervised the teaching of young and old alike, chiefly in the more settled sections, while on the frontiers the regular clergy, especially the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits, supervised first the conversion and later the education of the "wild" Indians of the mountains, valleys, plains, and jungles. Everywhere, therefore, was spread the leaven of Catholic Christianity, modified by the American environment. The State and Church jointly supervised the building of missions, monasteries, convents, and churches. This control reached even to architecture, sculpture, and painting, and to the levying and collecting of taxes for religious purposes. All human activities came to be controlled and supervised by the State and the Church. Toward this end, the Index and the Inquisition were mildly enforced in the Spanish



colonies, and school curricula were shaped for the greater glory of God and King.

But to the Caribbean, during the long centuries of colonial supervision, came frequently the breath of European philosophies brought deliberately by the Protestant privateers of England and Holland and free-thinkers from France. Reaction to colonial teachings of religion and politics was inevitable, and in many regions of the Caribbean old traditions of thought were replaced by the new learning from abroad. Sometimes this reaction was in the form of bloody revolutions but sometimes it took the milder form of religious and intellectual scepticism. As the nineteenth century progressed, free-thinking developed in some localities into almost a fetish, especially among self-styled intellectual leaders. And while the masses of the people were little affected, the small minority, as so often happens, pursued their puerile principles to a place where they could not turn back. When the intellectuals had arrived at this stage in their emotional thinking they were ready to tinker with the educational systems and to force their theories upon their contemporaries.

But no matter what changes might occur in the educational institutions and in the minds of the leaders, the great majority of the people were forgotten, and, except in Mexico, no one arose to champion their cause. Thus illiteracy, which had existed in the colonial period, diminished very little in the nineteenth century. Today, of all Latin America, the Caribbean area has both the highest percentage of illiteracy and the lowest percentage, the former represented in the Negro republic of Haiti and the latter in the largely white republic of Costa Rica.

Many of the individual leaders of Caribbean intellectual life have won wide fame for their literary productions in the field of poetry, prose, and the drama. Others have turned their energies toward music or to the arts. Few in number, however, are the scientific leaders of the region. But education has not always been an unmixed blessing. Today many intellectuals of the Caribbean are living in exile because, owing to the nature of their political writings, they fear for their lives, or because they believe that the intellectual climate of the area is not conducive to their own particular brand of thought.

## VI

Caribbean culture is rooted in personalism (*personalismo*) and in the non-religious missionary-martyr complex. During the last two generations Caribbean area culture has undergone numerous changes. The Mexican Revolution following 1910 brought to Mexico a change in economic and social thinking which, spreading to the other countries of the Caribbean area, soon brought a leaven of new attitudes toward life. "Indianism" of the mainland contained ideologies which were applicable to the Negro and mixed populations of the islands. Man, as man, became a new concept once long forgotten and lost to sight through the long centuries of colonial exploitation.

Man's new dignity was expressed in the literature of the region. Some of the writing, prose and poetry alike, was revolutionary and inflammatory and appeared in the form of periodical articles, innumerable pamphlets, and many books. Writers of every social and political color (and racial as well) sprang into the intellectual breach which was opened by the new social thought. Man's lot should be improved all agreed—but "how" was the question. A study of this literature today discloses the cultural "pulse" of the people of yesterday.

In art, too, the new thinking and the new freedom were disclosed. The "native" arts, as seen in Mexican murals (by no means new to Mexico) surged up from below, and new national interest and national pride in this form of national expression developed. Haiti, particularly, brought to a culmination its artistic expression in its 1950 bicentenary, which commemorated the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of Port-au-Prince, while Colombia pointed with pride to its early Indian culture as represented in its Chibcha stone artifacts and superb gold ornaments. Guatemala and other Central American countries began to emphasize their native Indian arts for the benefit of the tourist who with his dollar greatly helped to give stimulus to nativism.

Music, always an expression of Caribbean culture, found new adherents in dance halls and music halls throughout the continent. From the gentle Indian harmonies, through the rhythmic Negro melodies, to the lilting pseudosophisticated Calipso songs, artistic

expression moved from the country to the city and out of the area to world musical centers.

With all this recrudescence of soul-expression there developed a new philosophy of living and thinking, often a substitute for orthodox religion, but generally a visible striving for something unattainable by the masses through direct political or economic action. Some of this philosophical thinking resulted from the concept of the "Cosmic Race." The people of the Caribbean area became aware of a color difference and then of a "color line" as conceived by tourists from the United States. The presence of the Chinese, especially in Cuba and other islands, rather than the presence of the Negro, brought a sudden awareness for the first time of racial differences. In Panama, the racial as well as the cultural crossroad of the Caribbean area, individual differences of color came to be looked upon with new interest and criticism.

But the new philosophy had not only a disturbing influence—it also had a quieting influence, and a reconciliation of disturbing factors has generally ameliorated criticism and any fears which may exist regarding the future of the Caribbean race. In this process new vistas and insight into future life have been opened to Caribbean eyes.

Culture is an evolutionary wheel, slower than political revolution, but even more fundamental. At mid-century the Caribbean area seemed to be in the midst of a cultural cycle, sparked by philosophical unrest and guided by a desire to become attuned to the cultural trends in the United States. The history of the next half-century should disclose many important and interesting changes in Caribbean life which cannot be seen clearly today.

## VII

Caribbean political problems are rooted in historical precedent and in human expediency. Everywhere in the Caribbean are found the tradition and the habit of one-man government. As far back as one cares to look in their panorama of history, the inhabitants of the area can see predominant precedent for such a condition. In the Iberian peninsula there is the vista of Roman emperors, Moorish califs, Germanic kings, and Spanish sovereigns, while in

the new world, there lies along the road of the past the tradition of American Indian *caciques* and African Negro chieftains. The white man brought the viceroy to America and thus joined the past with the present. The political revolutions for independence from Spain early in the nineteenth century led to the illogical establishment of republics, which in some instances became more monarchical than republican, and which finally led to the establishment in every country at one time or another of dictatorships. Thus the political cycle of one-man governments was completed after a brief hiatus of democracy.

It is true, of course, that dictatorships are not always "bad" for a country. But in too many instances the constitutions have first been violated and then abolished, only to be replaced with other political instruments which have in turn been overthrown, perhaps by bloody revolution. Certainly the countries of the Caribbean area have produced more than their share of the total number of constitutions prepared by the peoples of Latin America.

While democracies exist, on paper at least, in each of these states, corruption corrodes the political framework of many of the governments, and voting, though secret by law, becomes a means of enriching private coffers or of achieving political prestige for which no qualifications exist. Popular government in the United States sense of the term has yet to be effected in much of the area.

## VIII

Into this region of perplexing problems in recent years have come United States capitalists and industrialists, diplomats and tourists, none of whom have accomplished much to aid in solving the problems of the area. More often than not, these visitors have had a disturbing influence and have, therefore, complicated the problems which already exist. At long last, however, it should be apparent that reforms from within cannot alone be expected to solve the complicated issues of the region. Only with a sympathetic understanding of the problems of the Caribbean area can they be solved. In any case these problems present a challenge to our government and to our people which we, in this critical time in world history, cannot afford to overlook. Perhaps in the Caribbean area

we can perform a service in helpful cooperation which will make the world long remember that the Good Neighbor policy of the United States was something more than a facile phrase composed by harassed statesmen as a means of solving our own pressing problems of national depression and continental security.

Because the state of Florida is virtually a physical part of the Caribbean area, an analysis of its problems—political, economic, social, religious, educational, and cultural—by a conference of experts at the University of Florida is eminently logical. Hence, this symposium on the “Caribbean at Mid-Century” properly displays an understanding of trends, factors, and conditions which have long been at work to shape the area’s destiny. Such a study points the way to solutions which, if put into effect, may lead to better living in this part of America. Subsequent conferences dealing with this region will attempt to analyze factors, seek causes, and suggest remedies pertaining to the Caribbean area.

A. CURTIS WILGUS, *Director*  
School of Inter-American Studies



*Part I*

*INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS OF THE  
CARIBBEAN AREA*





Edward G. Miller, Jr.: INTER-AMERICAN  
RELATIONS AT MID-CENTURY

I WAS invited by your President to appear before you today presumably because I could make a contribution to your deliberations. From my point of view, however, there is a different value. We in Washington rarely have the opportunity to detach ourselves from the daily schedule of appointments and meetings, from the masses of detail. In the course of time this puts us increasingly in danger of losing the long-range vision that alone can keep our policy moving toward the established objectives of the American people. Too often the people of our country and we in government tend to think in terms of the daily headlines. We fail to differentiate between the short-term aspects of an event or of a policy and the long-range objectives towards which we should be moving. Too often we take the superficial view, we use the catch phrase, we personalize issues, we paint them in terms of absolute black or white. We often fail to remember that, in many of our complex situations of today, policy and decisions are shaped by all sorts of factors, and we must bear in mind the interrelation between events on the one hand and human wills on the other.

I am grateful, therefore, to be able to meet with you here in this atmosphere of detachment. It is you, as students and thinkers, who enjoy a comprehensive view of our affairs. It is you who are in the best position to estimate the current developments of our international relations in terms of their historic significance. It is you, therefore, to whom officials like myself must repeatedly turn for objective guidance.

## I

Falling into the spirit of the occasion, I have chosen as my topic "Inter-American Relations at Mid-Century." We take the year 1950 as a pinnacle from which to survey the entire century, with the altogether unprecedented changes that it is impressing upon us all.

Perhaps the chief surprise that this view contains for me is the discovery that the 1930's in our inter-American relations are already a part of history—so much has happened since.

We have, here, a paradox; for no essential change has, in fact, occurred since the 1930's with respect to our inter-American relations in themselves. The course on which we then embarked, in pursuance of the "Good Neighbor Policy," is the course to which we all hold today.

This stability in a world of change is one of the outstanding facts that emerge from a survey of the century. It is among the notable features of the relationships among the members of our traditional inter-American community of states. Instead of anything new there is, rather, a continuing development and progress year by year along the lines that were laid out almost a score of years ago. The inter-American system becomes stronger with time. The practices of its members in the fields of international and domestic democracy show the gains in our experience and the persistence of our basic drives. But there is nothing essentially new.

And yet, all has changed. In spite of the remarkable continuity of inter-American affairs that runs from the early 1930's up to this point of mid-century, the 1930's themselves now belong to another age. The change that has brought this about is not a change within our regional community but a vast transformation of the world at large, a transformation in the outer environment to which our community of American states must maintain its adjustment.

Look at what has happened. In the 1930's this "New World" of ours still cherished its detachment from the ancient rivalries that kept the "Old World" in a state of incipient flames and chaos. The symbol of our isolationism in this country was the memory of our Pilgrim ancestors, who had escaped from the sordid embroilments of feudal Europe and crossed the wide ocean to

sow, here in this "New World," the seeds of a new beginning. It is almost incredible to reflect that only fifteen years ago the Senate of the United States rejected a proposal that we join the International Court of Justice, an institution which today we participate in as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Another manifestation of the ostrich-like philosophy of dealing with problems by not recognizing them was the enactment of the Neutrality Act of 1937. Even within the Department of State this attitude manifested itself by the use throughout the last war of the file notation "European War—1939" in describing the greatest world conflagration of all times.

The sense of escape from the Old World which underlay this philosophy and the feeling of a new opportunity for peace and freedom were shared by all the American republics on the basis of their common experience in gaining their political independence of Europe. That was what provided the basis of our common policy in the 1930's. We were determined to maintain a political insularity, to secure ourselves behind oceanic barriers, to insulate our common Hemisphere against contagion from an "Old World" that appeared to be undergoing its death agony. That was the purpose of our mutual association in the inter-American system. No more poignant symbol of that purpose exists than the imaginary line circumscribing our Hemisphere which the American states declared, in the 1939 "Declaration of Panama," should stand as a barrier excluding "any hostile act by any non-American belligerent nation." But the waves of the Atlantic continued to bear the traffic of war; just as they had, a thousand years earlier, continued to lap the coast of Britain despite the gesture of King Canute. Soon it was the warships and warplanes of the *New World* that were crossing the sea to do battle in the Old. In deference to the realities of a shrinking earth, the defense of the Hemisphere was now established beyond the Panama line on the beaches of Normandy. Today the defense of the Hemisphere is being pursued positively in Berlin, in Vienna, in the Near East, in South Asia, and on the fields of Korea.

This is the great revolution in the position of Hemisphere affairs that has taken place since the 1930's. More than a century after Canning delivered himself of his idle boast that he had "called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the old"—

more than a century later the New World finally has, in fact, undertaken to assume the burden of redressing that balance.

The old European balance of power was, in one sense, the major casualty of World War II. Never before, not even when the Ottoman Empire knocked at the gates of Vienna, did our civilization face such an appalling prospect as confronted it in the aftermath of the war. Western Europe lay temporarily prostrate before a menace that exceeded the threat of Hitler and his gang, against which we had just fought. The mighty Russian empire with its traditional imperialistic ambitions was now in the hands of a ruthless oligarchy bent on substituting its own unbridled will for the laws of free men the world around. That oligarchy quickly subverted and enslaved the nations of eastern Europe; it moved on Iran and Turkey and Greece; it maneuvered for control in France and Italy; it undertook to bring the uncaptured sectors of Berlin to submission. What Hitler had failed to do seemed now on the brink of rapid accomplishment by International Communism, since the power necessary to effective resistance had been paralyzed in western Europe by the effects of the war.

Little seemed to stand in the way of a quick Communist advance to the Atlantic. Once Soviet Communism stood on the opposite shore from us, the future of freedom in this New World of ours would be precarious indeed. For then we would be truly isolated from our captive allies and the captured elements of our strength in Europe—isolated not by our decision and after the fashion of our own choice, but by the guns pointed at us across the ocean from what was no longer a friendly coast. This would be a new and far more complete kind of isolation than our own old isolationism had ever contemplated. The power of western Europe, so far from being on our side, would now be mobilized by the masters of the Kremlin and directed against us.

It was in this dire emergency that the New World stepped in "to redress the balance of the old." Today we are in the very midst of the effort to achieve this aim, and thereby to set our civilization back on the road to the realization of our common democratic ideals. We are in the midst of a heroic struggle of the entire free world to close up the breaches in its defense, to reassemble its strength, and to resume its progress.

Let me repeat: the great change in our inter-American relations since the 1930's is that today the defense of our common Hemisphere can no longer be secured by taking passive positions offshore. It can be secured only by positive, self-sacrificing action on the front lines across the seas in the deadly struggle of today.

## II

The passing of our isolation as a Hemisphere has been signified in a more profound and permanent fashion by the active participation of all our countries in building and developing the United Nations. We have all recognized that this kind of organization must be developed on a world-wide basis so as to overcome international anarchy and join nations together in the drive for the achievement of peace and freedom under law. The role of the American states as a group has been far from incidental in the formation of the United Nations. Some of its basic features have a distinct inter-American cast. They represent ideals that have been nurtured and experience that has been gained in the development of our own regional community.

The basic significance for the Hemisphere, however, is what I am concerned with here. If, through the machinery of the United Nations, one of the smaller American states plays a positive role in the resolution of a local conflict in, say, South Asia, it is because that local conflict has its eventual bearing on the security of that country and of the Hemisphere.

If our inter-American system has had its impact on the United Nations, it is also true that the United Nations has had a decided impact on our inter-American system, which has become a regional organization within the terms of the United Nations Charter. The charter of the Organization of American States, drawn up at Bogotá in 1948, clearly reflects in its design the architecture of the United Nations. Although this Organization of American States represents a continuing development of the inter-American system which goes back into the last century, it has also acquired a difference simply by virtue of the existence of the United Nations. Again, the impact of the environment has been decisive.

*III*

One of the appealing features of the historical approach to our international affairs is the way it dissipates from our view all the confusions that cloud the immediate course of events. As we look more closely at the present and the immediate future, however, we cannot entirely avoid these confusions.

One of the most effective arguments occasionally advanced against our foreign aid programs, for example, has been the need of our own people at home. Some persons have asked why we should spend public funds to cooperate with some distant country in the rehabilitation of its agriculture when those same funds could usefully be added to those being spent on farms within our own borders. Or why should we spend our dollars for public health in Greece when we have public health needs right here at home?

The people of the United States have shown that they understand what the answer to this is. In a nutshell: if you confine yourself to repairing the roof on your own house while your neighbor's house is on fire, you may find you have no roof to repair.

A similar argument has been persistently advanced regarding the needs of our neighbors here in our own Hemisphere. The dire severity of those needs, in many cases, is incontestable. The other American states are united to us by traditional bonds of intimacy and close cooperation. They are our fellow Americans, and we acknowledged a mutual responsibility for cooperation with them long before we assumed any like degree of responsibility with respect to countries overseas. Why, therefore, should not the billions of dollars we are spending to redress the balance in Europe and the Near East be added, instead, to what we spend on cooperation to meet the needs of our neighbors in the Hemisphere?

The answer again is the same as in the case of our own country. The security of our common Hemisphere against the looming threat of Russian aggression is a necessary precondition to the realization, within the Hemisphere, of our aspirations for a better life for everyone.

Let me make this quite clear. What is at stake in the defense of the free world is the freedom of men to solve their own problems by the exercise of their own free will. It is of more immediate importance to preserve that free will than to concentrate on the solu-

tion of the problems, because without that free will the problems cannot be solved. The fruits of freedom depend on the ability to exercise freedom. It would do none of our neighbors in the Hemisphere any good, in the long run, if the United States diverted to them the resources that, applied overseas, serve to maintain our common independence. Dead men and slaves are in a poor position to improve their lot.

We are all in the same boat. Consequently, each of us has precisely the same stake in keeping it afloat and the same justification for sacrifice.

The security of our Hemisphere is of uppermost concern to all of us. This does not mean that the internal needs of our own country or of the Hemisphere should be or can be disregarded. The very growth and development of democracy in this Hemisphere makes its own demands. As peoples succeed in realizing the opportunities of freedom, as they emerge from ignorance and ancient misery, as they gain a more commanding view of the world and its possibilities, they are less than ever satisfied to endure the lot that they had previously, perhaps, taken for granted. This is all to the good if it stirs their leaders to increased action and to an increased sense of public responsibility.

In point of fact, one of the distinct changes that has marked inter-American relations in the past twenty years is precisely this growing preoccupation of statesmanship in the Americas with improving the lot of the masses of people throughout our countries by means of economic and social development. The principle and the practice of cooperation among the American states to this end have become so well established that we find it possible to take for granted today what would have seemed extraordinary a few years ago.

The United States has participated wholeheartedly with the other American states in the development of this kind of cooperation, not only through the various agencies of the Organization of American States, but also through the loan programs of the Export-Import Bank and the International Bank, in which we are the principal stockholder, in the extensive and far-reaching programs of technical cooperation carried on by our own Institute of Inter-American Affairs, and in the cooperative activities that such government agencies as our Public Health Service and our

Department of Agriculture have for years now been carrying on throughout the Hemisphere.

Looking backward over these developments, and looking forward to their continuation, I am struck by one fact: this cooperation for social and economic development has had a sort of haphazard character in the past dozen years since its first effective beginnings. Programs and projects without interrelationships among them have often been taken up on an individual basis. The organization of many of these activities into the new "Point Four" program, however, has promoted a strong tendency to bring them together in such a way that they complement and mutually support one another. I have no doubt that the future will see a greatly increased effectiveness resulting from coordinated effort to achieve economic development on a wide and varied front. We are giving expression, in these matters, to one of the main historic drives of our century.

I should like, however, to leave a very clear distinction in your minds. While international cooperation for the betterment of popular living conditions has become an established, normal procedure of governments in the twentieth century, the kind of thing we have been doing through the European Recovery Program (to take an outstanding example) represents emergency action to re-establish the strategic foundation of Hemisphere security in the face of an immediately looming menace.

#### IV

These, then, are the conclusions that I draw from a survey of our inter-American relations at mid-century. The twenty-one American states have demonstrated the stability of their international system. They have made persistent progress along the course that they set for themselves in the early thirties. The great change is in the world at large. That change has had the effect of finally making it impossible for the New World to achieve its security by isolation. Its security, today, must be achieved on the front lines in Europe and Asia. It is with this end in view that the American states have played a positive role in the creation and development of the United Nations. It is with this end in view that the United



States has thrown its resources into the struggle of the democracies in the Old World to redress the balance against them.

At the same time, the American states have been strengthening their cooperative efforts to improve the living conditions of their own peoples. Assuming an eventual victory of the free world and the consequent achievement of our Hemisphere's outward security, this development holds the greatest promise for the second half of our century, on which we now embark.

# 2



## Harry F. Guggenheim: HEMISPHERE INTEGRATION NOW

PRESIDENT MILLER has honored me with an invitation to address you on a general subject in the relations between the United States and Latin America. I chose for the specific subject of my address, "Hemisphere Integration Now."

I shall attempt to convince you that a foreign policy for the United States, which includes the political, economic, and military integration of this Hemisphere, is essential to our well-being, and possibly even our survival, as a free nation.

### I

The integration of the Western Hemisphere now is not suggested as a policy of "isolationism" or insulation from the rest of the world, or as a substitute for the role that we should play, say, in the North Atlantic Pact or the movement for a United Europe. It is an anchor that we should let go now to windward, in the best holding ground, before the storm breaks.

I speak as a citizen of the United States without office, and as a seeker of truth. My thesis rests on the following premises:

1. *War is bestial and inhuman. It is a curse on the people of the world. There is, however, a greater curse, and that is national enslavement, which is the danger from a lost war.*

2. *Nationalist Communism as presently practiced by the Politburo of Soviet Russia is an international conspiracy to overthrow*

*non-Communist governments throughout the world. Stalin rigidly follows the policy of Lenin, who proclaimed: "We are living not merely in a state but in a system of states, and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable."*

*Should Soviet Russia be successful in this conspiracy, sovereign states will disappear under the dictatorship of Russia's Imperialist Politburo.*

3. *The transition from the sea age of transportation to the air age has now developed to a stage where all nations are susceptible to attack and many to destruction from the air. As Hanson W. Baldwin, of The New York Times, has said: "Frightful agents of destruction have conferred upon the offense a great and growing lead over the defense, and have altered—particularly the coming intercontinental and transworld missiles—all American strategic concepts."*

4. *Neutrality is a luxury that weak states can only indulge in with the approval of strong states. In recent times the tragic fate of Belgium, Holland, and Denmark are such concise and clear examples of frustrated neutrality that the multiplication of examples seems unnecessary. Only the defeat of the Axis powers saved them as sovereign states.*

5. *The United Nations and the Organization of American States are aids, but not yet substitutes for foreign policy. They are organizations for immediate consultation in international emergencies, where action can be taken quickly against threats to the peace and aggression. They are forums where foreign policy can be examined, debated and developed, and where international harmony and human well-being can with good will be promoted.*

But until the strong have reached a state of enlightenment in which they are willing to temper strength with reason and justice, there can be little hope for substituting the United Nations and Organization of American States for foreign policy. And surely before justice becomes acceptable to the strong, they will require assurance that justice will not be replaced by self-interest of the numerically greater votes of the weak.

Vishinsky, who has used the forum of the United Nations so

often to create ill rather than good will, has made quite clear the power position of Russia. He has realistically called attention to the fact that—veto, or no veto—the great powers now enjoy and will continue to enjoy the power to break the peace.

Franklin D. Roosevelt warned us in 1939 that our frontiers were on the Rhine. Europe still may be our first line of defense, but this Hemisphere is our last line of defense. It is our inner citadel, and it must be made impregnable.

The age of the air has made this citadel vulnerable. In World Wars I and II we succeeded in keeping the lands of this Hemisphere free from attack. That was only because we were in a transition period from the sea age to the air age.

Now we can no longer expect to keep this Hemisphere from assault by air. We must prepare for its defense now before it is too late. We cannot do so by sketchy, or even by elaborate, plans for action in case war is brought to us. We should not wait for some military disaster to galvanize the Inter-American Defense Board into action.

The present lack of cohesion of the American states is due, in the first instance, to the isolationist foreign policy of the United States in the past. This age-long policy was altered when the United States entered World War I. After it, the disillusioned people of the United States reaffirmed the general policy of isolationism until World War II, even though, through the Good Neighbor Policy, we recognized the common interests of this Hemisphere. Since then, our foreign policy has made a complete reversal of course, and we are headed away from the territorial borders of the United States in every direction of the compass.

But, in our haste to accept world responsibility and assume world leadership, we have neglected our nearest neighbors in the Americas. Isolationism has kept us from them in the past, and our new foreign policy, which plummets us into Europe and Asia, keeps us from them now.

## II

Before elaborating on the proposal to integrate this Hemisphere, it is essential to examine briefly the present over-all foreign policy of the United States.

In this examination, we should keep constantly before us our objective—the objective of all foreign policy. The first purpose of any such policy is to maintain our integrity as a sovereign power. The second is, with enlightenment and consideration of others, to promote our national interests. Survival is simple to understand, since it is the first law of nature; but our “national interests,” the well-being and progress of 150 million people, are sometimes difficult to assess.

What is the new foreign policy that has been developing since the close of World War II? It is vague, confusing, and headed in three different directions at the same time:

1. We are attempting to assume, in a measure, the old role of Great Britain in maintaining the balance of power in Europe and in the protection of British trade routes in the Mediterranean and Near East. The clearest example of this comes from Greece. “Early in 1947,” we are informed by Foster Dulles, the British Government “privately told our government that it felt unable to go on alone in Greece; that, unless the United States was prepared to help out, it would withdraw, with the probable result that Greece would fall, Turkey would be encircled, and the entire Eastern Mediterranean and Near East would fall under Soviet Communist domination.” We stepped into the breach and the British moved out.

2. The second course of our foreign policy flowed from the first. When we assumed Great Britain’s place in Greece, President Truman enunciated his doctrine in which he said, in part: “I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. . . .”

This is the policy of containing Russia. It was defined by George F. Kennan, of the American Foreign Service, in a lecture at the National War College in January, 1947. He considered Russia’s political action as “a fluid stream which moves constantly wherever it is permitted to move. If it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and accommodates itself to them. . . . Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western World is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter force.”

3. There is a third part of our foreign policy which Edgar Mowrer has called the “moralistic fallacy.” “This is the belief,”

he says, "that in its dealings with foreign states or groups, the United States should be guided by the degree to which said states or groups conform internally to American standards." In other words, we are attempting to reform the world. Mowrer, describing how it worked in China, came to the conclusion that our diplomats were more eager to promote what they called "the revolt of Asia" than to secure a China impervious to Russian influence.

The first part of our foreign policy, an attempt to maintain the balance of power in Europe, is logical.

We abandoned isolationism as a policy just before World War II because we feared that the Axis powers would succeed in subjugating the whole world. We preferred to fight on foreign soil rather than at home. We accepted the concept of the air age that our defense frontiers had moved from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to the Rhine, North Africa, and Okinawa. So today, with our frontiers still on the Rhine, the balance of power in Europe is of vital importance to us.

The North Atlantic Pact, and the movement for a United Europe, stand in the way of Russian aggression. The United States has taken the leadership in the North Atlantic Pact. It is unfortunate, in my opinion, that this leadership is not where it traditionally belongs—with England and France. We can only *help* Europe; we cannot save her from Russian ideology or force. If Europe no longer has the will to make desperate and supreme efforts to preserve the essential freedoms the democratic world has cherished, she will succumb to the tyrants of Russia, no matter what we may try to do.

In 1951, we shall perhaps find out whether western Europe is willing and able to make available the necessary manpower. There are disturbing rumors that many Europeans are succumbing to the false propaganda that the present world crisis is a battle between Russian and United States imperialism. How pleasant it would be to remain neutral, they think. But neutrality, in the air age, is utterly impossible.

The second part of our foreign policy is the Truman Doctrine—which is physically and financially beyond our abilities, and morally wrong in its implied righteousness. Words such as "free peoples," "attempted subjugation," and "outside pressures" can be interpreted however the President sees fit, and this is a very grave

danger. We Americans have proven beyond cavil our willingness to help weak or distressed nations, but the Truman Doctrine commits us to a world-wide policy of assistance, financial or military, on a scale we cannot possibly support.

The third course of our foreign policy, in which we require other states to conform to United States standards if they would have relations with us, is inevitably doomed to failure in the future as it has so notably failed in the past in dealing with such diverse ideologies as those of Spain, the Argentine, Guatemala, and China. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this doctrine would be to have no relations with any states unwilling to reform themselves in our own image of white, male, Anglo-Saxon democratic Protestant perfection.

As national interests are a basic consideration in foreign policy, we must determine where they lie.

There is a lack of understanding of our long-distance economic goals. We drift into situations and international political crises which may be quite contrary to our national interests. For example, during the crisis between Arabs and Jews over Israel, our policy shifted from quarter to quarter like a weathervane in a storm. At that time, the public had an intimation for the first time that oil in the Middle East was one of the considerations of our foreign policy. How vital are these oil fields to us? Is a keystone of our foreign policy to prevent Russia's access to the oil reserves of the Middle East? If such a policy is necessary to our survival and national interests, and within the power of our resources, the public should be informed and made ready to approve such a policy. If this is to be a part of our foreign policy, let it be clear-cut; not involved, confused, and hindered by other actions, unless they are useful to our objective. Britain's success in her period of growth was greatly aided by her clear knowledge of what she wanted, and often by her quite frank methods of achieving it. Obviously, the interests that Britain had in the protection of trade routes in the Mediterranean and Near East are not identical with ours. Great Britain's culture, power, and fabulous riches followed her policy in that direction. But the United States may only exhaust her strength and resources in the protection of interests that are of little or no value to her.

We no longer believe that our national interests can best be

served by an overbearing, selfish nationalism. In the principle of Point Four, President Truman has proposed a plan for us to help less advanced nations to increase their productivity and well-being.

Enlightened self-interest should urge the implementation of Point Four, but only with careful planning and under adequate safeguards. Are resources for this purpose to be prodigally expended for all peoples over the earth who need our aid? Obviously, even our great wealth could not stand such a strain. Yet at the present time, Point Four is an instrument of the Department of State, to be bartered for day-to-day diplomatic needs.

Our foreign policy is muddled because our national interests are obscure. Furthermore, while we are committing ourselves to financial and military aid all over the world, we do not know whether our resources are great enough for our commitments.

What we require is a new, bipartisan agency composed of the executive and legislative branches of government, coordinated with the State Department, to carry on a continuous appraisal of our national interests and national resources. Instead, in this time of crisis, we are staggering along with fifty-nine major Government departments and agencies, of which forty-six have interests in the field of foreign affairs. There are thirty-two interdepartmental committees coordinating work. It is an impossible and unworkable arrangement.

Minus some over-all coordinating body, our foreign policy is bound to remain unrealistic and illogical. At a moment in history when the United States must undertake, through foreign policy, to lead the world away from wars toward peace, we have not set a course that even our own people can follow with understanding and approval.

### III

The United States has a last line of defense in this Hemisphere to which she will be forced back if our first line of defense in Europe fails. This line consists of our neighboring American states.

To disregard this line of defense and neglect the Americas may be our greatest national folly. Neglect can be traced in the past, as mentioned before, to our old traditional policy of isolationism,



and since World War II to the lack of a comprehensive truly American foreign policy to take the place of isolationism.

Perhaps lack of consideration of the defense of this Hemisphere is also partly due to the past teachings of geopoliticians, of whom Professor Spykman, writing in the midst of World War II, was a leading exponent. He concluded:

South America beyond the Equator can be reached only by sea. This applies not only to the United States but also to the republics of Colombia and Venezuela, which lack adequate land communication with their southern neighbors. The main area of the southern continent will continue to function in American foreign policy not in terms of a continental neighbor but in terms of overseas territory.

The airplane has already almost broken down this barrier. There is little doubt that it will soon be completely eliminated, and with it this misconception of what direction our foreign policy ought to take.

So let us examine our foreign policy in Latin America now, with the object of improving it for the greater security and national interests of the United States and all of the other states in this Hemisphere.

Our policy toward Latin America has been uncertain and vacillating. We have gone through periods of Manifest Destiny, Imperialism, The Big Stick, Dollar Diplomacy, a Tutorial Policy, and an Intervention Policy. Finally, under President Hoover a non-intervention policy was practiced which Franklin D. Roosevelt put into words, expanded, and sold as the Good Neighbor Policy. The present administration adheres to the letter of the Good Neighbor Policy, but has no kinship with it in spirit. There is an apathy toward Latin America. As a result, we no longer enjoy the warm relationships built up during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

What course should our policy in Latin America take? I repeat that it should be directed toward the most complete political, economic, and military integration among all the states in this Hemisphere that can be effected by diplomacy. We should make this our cornerstone of foreign policy, because this Hemisphere is our last line of defense, and within it are deep national interests which have been neglected. Those far-off fields of Europe have seemed

so much greener that we have overlooked the ones at home, close to our sight.

Latin America is an undeveloped and excellent area for essential industry. It is our only source of many strategic and critical materials. Of the twelve materials listed as strategic in 1943, eleven—copper, manganese, chromium, tungsten, tin, antimony, platinum, mercury, iodine, sodium nitrate, and bauxite—are available in Latin America. In addition, Latin America also produces oil, iron ore, fibres, foodstuffs, drugs, woods, natural rubber, meats, hides, and wool.

The volume of our trade with Latin America is indicated by one very revealing set of figures: From July 1, 1940, to July 1, 1945, non-military agencies of the United States Government purchased \$2,360,000,000 in commodities from Latin America out of a total of \$4,387,000,000 spent for commodities throughout the world. Since the last war, more than one-third of our merchandise imports have come from Latin America.

The population of the United States will reach its peak about 1970 according to students of population trends. Latin America, with a present population equal to our own, will still be growing in 1970. It may well outgrow the Russians, particularly if we are able, by the right sort of assistance, to raise Latin American standards of public health to match our own.

Potential industry, population, strategic materials, and food are all here in our own Hemisphere, for the survival of all of us, if we have the wit and the will to use them. Up to now, unfortunately, we have not shown an evidence of such acumen.

Take the case of Chile, one of many such. Between April, 1948, and July, 1950, we spent about ten billion dollars under the Marshall Plan to save western Europe from Communism. Meanwhile, what is happening in Latin America? S. Cole Blasier, writing in the *Political Science Quarterly* for September, 1950, says:

Since the formation of the Chilean Popular Front in 1936, the Communists have played a crucial role in the political life of Chile. Communists have come closer there than anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere to controlling a national government.

Chile produces copper and sodium nitrate in quantity—both vital strategic materials. She has almost 30 per cent of the world's

copper reserves, and produces approximately 8 per cent of the nitrogen consumed by the world in the form of sodium nitrate.

In view of her importance to us, what has our diplomatic policy been toward Chile? Regrettably, one of friendly apathy—just as it has toward the rest of Latin America. Yet Chile, right now, like much of the world, is suffering from the destroying germ of inflation. Like so many other countries in Latin America, her social soil is fertile for Communist infiltration. Must our foreign policy only be formed when an emergency arises in an attempt to save us from imminent peril? Can we not continuously so conduct our foreign affairs as to *prevent* disaster?

The responsible heads of the Chilean State are aware of the menace of Communism. The people, if informed, can be relied on to resist it. But the Communists are skillful. They rely on economic distress and on American indifference to help them get their way. If we let Chile lapse into confusion through our own neglectfulness, then it is possible that Communists could take over the state. If Chile should then agree to send her copper and nitrates to Russia by commercial treaty, what would be the policy of our Department of State? We must never allow ourselves to be confronted by such a dilemma. We must bind Chile and all Latin American countries so closely to us that Communism will cease to be a threat.

We need sugar from Cuba, oil and iron ore from Venezuela, coffee from Brazil, tin and tungsten from Bolivia, copper, lead, and zinc from Mexico, hides and tungsten from the Argentine, vanadium from Peru, and platinum from Colombia. In emergencies, we may have to rely on Latin America for rubber, hemp, cocoa, tung oil, and quinine.

How *can* we implement the integration of this Hemisphere? To begin with, we must have a different state of mind. We should desire it, because we require it. The world has become a disturbing and grim place to live in. There is hope, and perhaps even happiness and example for the world, in this proposed regional alliance of the peoples of this Hemisphere.

The United States can, in my opinion, bring about integration in three ways: by diplomacy, economic union, and military alliances.

*First*, by diplomacy: We must acknowledge the importance of

good relations between the United States and the other states within this Hemisphere. The Division of Latin American Affairs within our Department of State should be raised in dignity and expanded in organization, to cope with the diverse problems so vital to all the Americas.

Our diplomacy in Latin America requires the highest degree of personal representation in our various missions. In the past, in numerous instances, it has been disgracefully poor. We have been represented by men unqualified to carry out their assignments, often unable to speak the language of the country to which they have been accredited. They have sometimes been chosen from private life wholly because of some financial contribution or at other times for some political contribution to the party in power. Before the end of World War II they were often inefficient foreign service officers, shunted into some Latin American state to get them out of the way. They have sometimes been ignorant and futile men. They have often been completely lacking in the culture, personal sympathy, and understanding so necessary in our relations with sensitive peoples sprung from Latin civilization. On the other hand, there *has* been progress in recent years, and we have also been represented and are being represented by men of the greatest distinction and competence in the foreign service. However, to accomplish our great aims *now* in this Hemisphere, we must sweep the Embassies and Legations in Latin America clean of misfits and incompetents.

Our diplomacy in Latin America should be rigidly directed to respect the sovereignty of all the states of this Hemisphere. Sovereignty can be respected only by strict adherence to the policy of non-intervention, including direct action or intrigue.

On September 12, 1950, there were reported two examples of United States intervention by meddling in distantly separated parts of the world. One United States envoy at Teheran openly preached land reform. Another publicly spoke in Montevideo on the American way of life and denounced the Third Position of Perón. Both of these meddling incidents took place during national election campaigns.

The internal affairs of the recognized sovereign states of this Hemisphere may be the cause of regret on the part of the United States, but they should never be the cause of intervention. Our

"policy of non-intervention" in Latin America must not be undermined by the traditional American desire to reform.

Finally, in our diplomacy, we should return to our ancient policy of recognition of sovereign states with absolute impartiality, not as a weapon to force reform. According to that policy, "(1) the new regime must appear to have control of the governmental machinery of state; (2) it must have the assent of the people without 'substantial resistance to its authority'; and (3) it must be in a position to fulfill all its international obligations and responsibilities."

At the present time we are in the inconsistent position of carrying on full diplomatic relations with Communist Russia, Socialist England, and several dictators in Latin America—but we draw the line at dictatorship in Spain. A short time ago we withheld recognition of Perón because we disapproved of his Third Position in the Argentine. We have had ambassadors to the Argentine on the one hand openly condemning, and others on the other hand slyly approving the political philosophy of the President of that sovereign state. This is not properly a function of a foreign ambassador. It is a form of intervention that should be banished from our diplomacy in this Hemisphere.

The interpretation of the above policy on recognition allows much room for discussion and disagreement. This is inevitable in diplomatic relations. However, if the policy is consistently adhered to in good faith, a pattern will eventually be woven which those seeking truth will acknowledge as fair, even if the results are not agreeable to everyone.

If we are not to intervene or meddle in the internal affairs of the Latin American states, neither can we tolerate intervention in this Hemisphere by outside states—the basic policy of the Monroe Doctrine.

Russian intervention by intrigue to spread Communism should be forestalled by rigid security measures and by the exchange of information between the agencies of the various nations entrusted with the task of maintaining domestic tranquility. We may dislike Socialism, or Dictatorships, or the Third Position, but while they remain political philosophies confined to the internal policies of sovereign states, we should learn to live peacefully with them.

*Second:* We must bind together the economic resources of this Hemisphere to protect all of us against military or economic ag-

gression. The hope of world free economies is not being realized. On the contrary, there are increasing regional and international preference agreements, cartels, exchange controls, export quotas, and tariffs. We should be prepared and eager in this Hemisphere to go as far as the rest of the world in breaking down all the bars to a free economy. In fact, we should lead wherever possible, but we must protect ourselves so long as restrictions are a part of the world economic order.

Specifically I propose that the United States, by bilateral agreements with other states of this Hemisphere and through tariff adjustments, make possible now the sale of at least part of their surplus exportable raw products and eventually all of the surplus that we can consume.

The United States must re-examine its tariffs on the importation of raw products from this Hemisphere and make concessions to further the end of Hemisphere integration.

We have made and are making outright gifts of colossal magnitude in the Eastern Hemisphere to strengthen our frontiers in Europe. By reduction of tariffs on certain raw products from states of this Hemisphere, we can strengthen our last line of defense. Of course, some of these products will compete with our own. That is a small price to pay, particularly since it will reduce our cost of living and in the long run should greatly expand our exports to the other states of this Hemisphere.

Since 1927 we have excluded Argentine beef from the United States. This is one example among others of our inept policy in the Argentine, and also of outstanding folly in Hemispheric policy. While we refuse to purchase beef from the Argentine to protect our cattle growers, we are giving billions of dollars annually to Great Britain, among other things, to purchase most of her beef from the Argentine. The good will which we feel we cannot afford to buy from the Argentine, in order to protect our cattle raisers, England purchases with our money. Thus it is plain that we need a new approach to the economic problems of this Hemisphere.

We must not negotiate at arms length as strangers, but as partners in a cause for common survival and well-being. Our objective should be to break down all trade barriers in this Hemisphere so that, eventually, there will be the same free movement of goods among the states of this Hemisphere as there now is among the

states of the United States. This will require us to sacrifice some vested interests; it will require some other states in the Hemisphere to sacrifice some of the momentary advantages of a narrow nationalism. In the greater interest of Hemispheric integration, we should assist the industrialization of Latin America whenever it seems economically sound.

I further propose that the capital of the Export-Import Bank be increased so that economically sound enterprises in this Hemisphere can be stimulated and expanded. Here again is indicated the need of an agency of government able to appraise our overall, long-range national interests and point out to what extent enterprise should be stimulated in this Hemisphere or elsewhere.

The proposed action toward economic integration on the part of the United States would help to stabilize the economy of Latin America. It would help to destroy the germ of inflation and curb the spread of Communism. It would provide the first articles for a partnership of the Americas through a real community of interests.

Where we have failed by full-dress conferences, innocuous political treaties, cultural interchanges, and uncertain and intermittent financial and technical aid, we can succeed by solving the basic economic problems of Latin America at slight immediate sacrifice and with much eventual benefit for the United States. It might well be the initial step leading in the distant future to a United States of the Americas, and beyond that to the far-off hope of World Government.

*Third:* We must forge the most comprehensive kind of military alliance for the protection of the countries of this Hemisphere. Results from our foreign policy in the Eastern Hemisphere, carried on at colossal sacrifice, are still uncertain. But leadership in a new foreign policy for the Western Hemisphere can achieve success at comparatively little sacrifice.

The experience of World War II should be a clear indication of our need for action while there is still time to take action. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Rio de Janeiro Conference was hastily called in an attempt to bring about Latin American solidarity in the war against the Axis. German activity in Latin America made this difficult; in fact, as it later proved, impossible. At the conference Sumner Welles stated:

... the security of three hundred millions of people who inhabit the Western Hemisphere and the independence of each of the countries here represented will be determined by whether the American nations stand together in this hour of peril, or whether they stand apart from one another.

However, the United States Navy and War Departments had informed Welles early in January, 1942, before the Conference, that a declaration of war by all the American nations, most of which were totally unprepared, would place the burden of defending the entire area from the Mexican border to Cape Horn on the United States at a time when this nation might have some difficulty defending its own shores.

In spite of this grave experience, the policy for military integration has been so weakly pursued that today, eight years after the Rio Conference which was called with great anxiety, we are pitifully ill-prepared to defend this Hemisphere.

Within the last month, events in Korea have reached a state of crisis. A week ago President Truman stated: "We are fighting in Korea for our national security and survival."

Does this mean that we have no alternative other than throwing all our resources into the struggle in Asia? The time is late but perhaps not too late even now to reassess our foreign policy and change its course. Great Britain and France have clearly indicated their belief that we should do so, at least so far as Asia is concerned.

The United States in her present position of world power requires and deserves a foreign policy clearly thought through and defined for our preservation and the promotion of our true national interests. We must evolve from our present method of making policy to meet current crises. Foreign policy is not like a grain crop that is sown in the spring and harvested in the summer; it is like an orchard that must be carefully guarded and cultivated for years before it can bear good fruit. I feel certain that a careful reassessment of our foreign policy will reveal that our great national interests lie in this Hemisphere.

#### IV

Pan Americanism, or at least what has been called a "Pan American feeling," goes back as far as 1741, when rebellious Spaniards asked for English help.

In the Nineteenth Century, Bolívar gave the great weight of



his deeds and name to Pan Americanism. "... the ideal of American unity appealed to men of vision in both North and South America during the first decade or two of the nineteenth century," says the historian Lockey. Mariano Moreno, the leading light of the Buenos Aires revolutionary "junta," was against it, and his opposition did much to shape Argentine diplomacy down to the present day. Moreno felt that distances were too great and problems and interests too diverse to allow successful cooperation.

The United States has not desired and so has not made any serious attempts to integrate this Hemisphere. The Argentine has never had an interest in following the United States through its tortuous maze of foreign policy in Latin America and indeed, more often than not, the Argentine has had every interest in blocking the objectives of the United States.

Of Moreno's original objections, the basic one of distance is no longer valid. Then Buenos Aires was about twenty-four days removed in travel time from Washington. Today the time is about twenty-four hours. In the near future the time will be cut in half. In the not distant future, when true rocket transportation becomes practicable, Washington will be about two hours removed from Buenos Aires. Moreno's other objection—that interests were too diverse—still keeps the Argentine and the United States apart and to a lesser degree the other states of this Hemisphere.

Today the national interests of the states of this Hemisphere are naturally linked together. We are in mortal peril unless we bind ourselves together for mutual protection. Mistakes of the past, antagonisms arising from them, our habits of thought based on the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and first half of the Twentieth Century world, make it difficult for both North and Latin Americans to accept the initial sacrifices that Hemispheric integration is bound to entail. However, "when the devil is sick, the devil a saint would be." In this moment of national, Hemisphere, and world sickness, perhaps we can rise sufficiently to the needs of these fateful times to overcome our prejudices of the past and our outdated modes of thinking.

I should like to revert to one of my original premises that Communism is an international conspiracy to overthrow non-Communist governments throughout the world. Here in this Hemisphere we can escape the Russian menace only by the most complete integration of our sovereign states that can be made practicable.

The old world of the sea age had some apparent luxuries now denied us. We no longer have the luxury of the Americas isolated by oceans, protected by the British Navy, and illumined by the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine. The luxury of making and hurling resounding phrases in order to arouse the people to anger and bitterness, now no longer may merely achieve personal or political advantage; it may be a danger to the sovereignty of the state. The chorus cry of "Yankee imperialism" by South American demagogues and professional Latin American intellectual "experts" from the north may have in the future a far more tragic consequence than creation of international disharmony. We can no longer permit ourselves flag-waving orgies, discriminations, trade barriers, and uneconomic policies under the name of nationalism when our urgent need is continentalism. In Latin America just and economic land reforms are overdue as are tax systems that support progress and stifle privilege. This is a late hour to kill by expropriation any more capitalistic geese that lay golden eggs before a new brand of golden-egged geese can be hybridized. And there is still time to establish the rights of the laborer before he receives the Communist kiss of death.

The integration of this Hemisphere is feasible. It is practical. It can be almost wholly accomplished through bilateral treaties later to be supplemented by multilateral treaties when desirable. Hemispheric conferences have been tried, with only limited success. Experience has proven that treaties, negotiated directly, represent the only effective method.

The hope of humanity in today's bellicose world lies in international understanding, good will, and cooperation. We must extend the solidarity of family and community and nation beyond our borders. We must make a new approach to human relations among nations. I believe that this can be best achieved through first building a community of interests. Where can there be better ground to build this community than in this Hemisphere, as a guiding light to world unity?

From the northern reaches of Canada to the tip of Tierra del Fuego, people have settled this continent to escape injustice and seek opportunity. They are united in spirit but separated by artificial boundaries of a past age. Break down these barriers so that the people of the Americas can rise to a new level of human understanding and progress!

*Part II*

*ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL  
PROBLEMS OF THE CARIBBEAN  
AREA*





Raymond E. Crist: RESOURCES OF THE  
CARIBBEAN

THROUGHOUT history and among all peoples the use that has been made of the land has had significant implications for all members of society. How many people own or control how much and what kind of land, and what they do with it, are matters of vital concern to all. The pattern of land use is frequently as much influenced by the system of land tenure as by the edaphic conditions, and the very lives of millions of people depend upon the way the land is utilized. Space does not permit the discussion of the salient features of the situation of land tenure and of land use in all the circum-Caribbean countries. Accordingly, the Antillean islands of Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Cuba, and the mainland countries of Venezuela and Mexico have been selected as being on the whole representative, and some aspects of land tenure and of land use in those political units will be examined in this paper.

*I. The Islands*

The West Indian islands, in the form of a great arc, stretch from the Peninsula of Yucatán in southeastern Mexico, to the mouth of the Orinoco, on the northeastern coast of South America. Cuba, the westernmost island, is within easy reach of Yucatán and Florida; the island of Trinidad, an outlier of the continent of South America, is separated from it by a narrow body of water, the Gulf of Paria. Between Cuba and Trinidad lies a heterogeneous

collection of islands varying greatly in size and potentialities. These islands were discovered by Columbus in his search for a westerly passage to India, and the name he gave them, the West Indies, is still used today; they assumed great strategic importance when Cortés and Pizarro sent back to their sovereigns their amazing reports of conquest in the wonder empires of the Aztecs and the Incas on the continents beyond.

The constantly warring states of northwestern Europe, also beckoned by glittering visions of gold, began to expand on the farther side of the Atlantic. To gain a foothold in the Caribbean—in those days when might frankly made right—was no easy task. The weakness of France, England, and Holland was evidenced in the very small crumbs of islands they were able to snatch from the rich Spanish table. These insignificant islands—they were as petty cash to the Spaniards, who controlled the rich mines on “the Main”—were colonized and fortified as outlying possessions by the several mother countries. The history of the Antilles became an accurate reflection, in miniature, of the internecine wars of Europe. On these lovely tropical shores the greed, the injustices, the diseases, and the fierce religious hatreds of Europe were brought to a focus.

So great was the lure of gold and adventure on the continent that the Spaniards actually encountered serious difficulty in maintaining on their islands garrisons of sufficient numbers to defend them against the enemy countries. We need not raise a smug eyebrow at such a manifestation of greed, for if the California of the gold-rush days had been as accessible to English colonists in the seventeenth century as was Mexico to the West Indian Spaniards in the sixteenth century, the lands of the English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard might well have been passed over in neglect. Because the island Spaniards were blinded by the gold beyond, fertile regions, which, by modern standards, were richly endowed with natural resources, for centuries were not made to produce enough to pay the expenses of government.

The result was that the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico—at times even Venezuela, Florida, and Louisiana—were subsidized from the treasury of New Spain in amounts varying from three to four million dollars a year. Meanwhile the English, French, and Dutch, lacking immediate access to the gold and silver mines, de-

veloped divers other techniques for conquering fortune: their buccaneers lay in wait for the great Plate Fleets of the Spaniards and plundered their bulging cargoes; they captured Negroes in Africa and sold them to the conquistadores for use on the plantations that were springing up all over the new Spanish possessions. However deplorable, it is a matter of historical record that relatively few sought out the Caribbean islands—Spanish, English, French, or Dutch—inspired by a motive higher than the desire to extract the greatest possible wealth in the shortest possible time.

The West Indian islands early became known as the sugar islands, though they were by nature adapted to any form of tropical agriculture. Yet even in the beginning little diversification of crops was practiced. Because it offered the quickest way to wealth by agriculture, cane growing was the common choice. Sugar was still in Europe a medicament bought by the ounce from the apothecary. Its high value in the European market, and the relative cheapness of its production in the Indies, once the slave trade was efficiently organized, made its cultivation an extremely profitable business.

## *II. Puerto Rico*

Very early in the history of Puerto Rico, once it was clear that little gold could be uncovered on the island, the attention of the crown officials was directed to the possibility of deriving wealth from the production of sugar, and many efforts were made to safeguard the sugar plantations. By Royal Decree, dated January 15, 1529, no sugar plantation, or anything necessary in its operation, including slaves, could be forcibly sold to satisfy debts, unless the King was the debtor. A somewhat larger quantity of sugar was produced on the island of Puerto Rico during the second half of the sixteenth century than during the second half of the eighteenth, when coffee growing became a prosperous enterprise. The growing of coffee was carried on to a large extent by free labor, because the techniques demanded a certain amount of training and skill, and the relative smallness of the unit made the keeping of slaves unprofitable. Returns were adequate but not exorbitant. The golden age of the coffee planter was the latter part of the nineteenth century, when coffee was the main agricultural export

crop and chief source of income for half the population. As sugar proved less and less able to meet competitive conditions, coffee came forward as the predominant plantation industry, and encroached, as sugar cane had once done—and was soon to do again—upon land otherwise devoted to food crops and stock raising.

Let us analyze briefly the process whereby, during the past half-century, the great increase in the value of exports from Puerto Rico has failed to be reflected in a general rise in the level of living. The Congress of the United States, moved partly by the current campaign against land speculation at home, on May 1, 1900, passed a resolution to the effect that no corporation could own more than 500 acres in Puerto Rico. But, since the resolution fixed no penalties for those who violated it, it was not respected. By 1930, violators of the 500-acre law—367 out of a total of 58,371 landholders—controlled almost one-third of all farmland, whereas farms of less than 20 acres, comprising 72 per cent of existing farms, occupied only 12.4 per cent of all farmland. The period from 1900 to 1930 was the golden age for the sugar companies, when, according to the *Report on the Sugar Industry in Relation to the Social and Economic System of Puerto Rico*, "sugar was everything and everything was sugar."<sup>1</sup> In the course of fifty years the industry has absorbed most of the fertile alluvial land of the island. The control of large landholdings could not have been maintained without control of the railroads, which the sugar industry accordingly built. Excellent black-top motor roads, the construction costs of which were contributed in the beginning out of insular funds, but increasingly—since the early thirties—by the general taxpayer of the United States in the form of federal funds, have naturally been of greater use to the modernized sugar industry than to the neglected coffee industry. Exports of sugar products to the mainland have paid for the major necessities of life, which have been bought in growing quantities in the continental United States. Finally, as brought out in the report just quoted, compiled in 1941, "the estimated sugar-cane wealth of the island is 36 per cent of all taxable wealth. Yet the sugar industry paid in 1940 only 23 per cent of all revenues of the government, while all other taxpaying groups, whose taxable wealth was esti-

<sup>1</sup> *Senate Document No. 1 of the First Session of the Puerto Rican Legislature.*



mated at 64 per cent of the total, contributed 75 per cent of all revenues of the government,"<sup>2</sup> although, according to the same source, slightly more than half of sugar's income over a period of years was derived from tariff benefits.

Hurricanes and the wagelessness of the Great Depression did not improve matters, and the people as a whole sought some effective way to stop the growth of the land monopoly. There was still that 500-acre law on the statute books, but it was old and toothless. Teeth were provided by act of the insular legislature in 1936, which made possible *quo warranto* proceedings for the taking over by the insular government of corporation acreages in excess of 500 acres. The sugar companies sensed the danger. They rushed to battle with the cry that it was unconstitutional to enforce a law whose violation had been accepted in practice for so many years. The Puerto Rican Supreme Court handed down a decision against the land monopoly of the corporations, and the decision was sustained by the United States Supreme Court. The problem of the island is stated in finely chiseled word-cameos in the decision of the Puerto Rican Supreme Court:

The existence of large land holdings in a small agricultural country, abnormally overpopulated and without basic industries other than those required for the preparation of agricultural products for the market, is contrary to the economic welfare of its people. . . . The end sought by the [500-acre] statute is to protect this small island and its population against monopoly which would end by making them serfs of a huge sugar factory.

The judges who wrote this decision faithfully reflected the feelings of the people, for the new legislature that met in 1941 passed a Land Law which created the Land Authority. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the Land Authority, the redistribution of the land to hungry people, or the proportional-benefit farms, or how effective they will be in the rehabilitation of the people of the island. Suffice it to say that the concentration of land since 1898 in the hands of a few sugar corporations has been considered a disservice by the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans, as is betokened by their loyal support at the polls in 1944 of the Popular Party, which has initiated agrarian reform. It is certainly

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

not a coincidence that the pre-election battle cry of the victorious party was "Bread, Land, and Liberty."

A significant item was reported by the United States Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs that visited the island in 1944:

The acreage formerly cultivated for locally consumed foodstuffs has been changed to cash crops for export, thus making Puerto Rico gradually and increasingly dependent upon importation of continental agricultural commodities. . . . Sugar acreage increased sevenfold (1899-1939) while food acreage increased only 2 1/6 times in that same period of time.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile the population has doubled; in other words, it has kept pace with the increase of food acreage. The increased food acreage, moreover, comprises only plots of the less fertile land, which was all that was available for the purpose. In short, there has been no "per capita" increase in produce for domestic consumption. But the cost of living has undergone an increase many times greater than any increases in wages, because of the fact that foodstuffs must be imported in ever-growing proportions from the United States, which is a high-price area.

In Java the Dutch were very careful not to allow sugar companies to alienate permanently large tracts of land for growing cane. According to law, planters could *rent* rice lands for the cultivation of sugar cane for not longer than eighteen months in any three-year period. This not only insured crop rotation, but prevented overdependence on imports of rice. In the British West Indies every proprietor of lands once was obliged, by one of the Slave Acts, to keep properly cultivated in root crops, or ground provisions, one acre for every ten slaves, exclusive of plots or gardens which the Negroes cultivated on their own account. It is to be regretted that regulations such as these, assuring as they did a modicum of crop diversification and self-sufficiency in foodstuffs, were not carried over into the sugar producing areas of today.

Although it is frequently maintained that, up to the point of diminishing returns, the plantation system is economically more efficient than the small owner-operator system, this contention, in

<sup>3</sup> Garver and Fincher, *Puerto Rico: Unsolved Problem*, Elgin, Illinois, 1945, p. 47

the opinion of Dr. Picó, well-trained observer and careful scholar, does not hold true in Puerto Rico:

The need for more than 500 acres per farm for efficiency in production has not been substantiated by facts. In view of the unsocial distribution of income that results from concentration of large tracts of land in the hands of private individuals, the practice of owning more than 500 acres should be condemned.

The owner-operator system of land tenure would, therefore, seem to be justified on economic grounds as well as from the point of view of social considerations. The sugar plantation system as evolved in Puerto Rico, particularly during the last half-century, has lacked the social stability that usually accompanies owner-operatorship—a phenomenon or state of affairs that seems to endow with broad geographic significance the classic statement: "*Latifundia perdidere Italiam.*" This system, in spite of its economic efficiency in production, has, everywhere in the world, been unable to escape labor troubles. Hostility, engendered by the friction between landed and landless, flares up frequently in strikes and revolts—modern versions of the bitter agrarian struggles so familiar to students of the rise and fall of societies around the Mediterranean.

Farming in large units may indeed permit of huge "economic" returns, which have, however, not infrequently been over-balanced by the low "social" gains. Unless profits are increasingly prorated on a fair percentage basis among capital, labor, and management, it may still hold true that

*Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.*

There is a crying need for higher capital investment, rationalization, and complete technical re-equipment in every phase of activity on the island, save in the sugar industry alone. But despite the modern technological processes that have been introduced into the sugar mill, the landless day laborer in the cane field remains in

the hoe and oxcart and machete stage of development, and he is paid according to the standards of pre-industrial society. The high-salaried sugar chemist in the mill is in the rarefied atmosphere of economic Olympian heights, far removed from the low-wage cane cutter grubbing away in the stifling humid air on the earth below; for the vigilance of the chemist saves the company his yearly salary many times over, but the efficiency of a man with a hoe and a machete merits only the poorest remuneration. Although it may well be true that the cash income from a single acre planted in cane is equal to the income that could be derived from as many as four to twelve acres planted in food crops, nevertheless the advantage is of little practical benefit to the mass of poorly nourished Puerto Ricans, who have little share in the sugar income. If mechanization is introduced all along the line, and if workers are freed from endemic diseases and are enabled to obtain a balanced diet, per capita production for those employed will increase and wages can rise; more food and social services can be purchased and island-wide production and well-being will increase in an upward spiral.

How can workers get a better diet, which would help step up efficiency? They must either grow more food or import more. Since sugar has pre-empted most of the good land on which the growing of foodstuffs would have been possible, it would seem logical and necessary to import more food. But how can Puerto Rican workers continue, with their present miserable wages, to buy food in the market of continental United States, in competition with workers earning five to ten times as much? Yet as long as the sugar interests can survive only behind the United States tariff wall, so surely will the Puerto Rican laborer be forced to pay American prices for consumers' goods, instead of bidding freely on the world market for cheaper produce. Thanks to these restrictions, some \$5,000,000 per year is added to the cost of rice, mainstay of Puerto Rican diet, and from 10 to 35 per cent is added to the cost of shoes, which are an essential in tropical Puerto Rico to the prevention and control of hookworm. To be sure, some students of the situation maintain that the benefits of the sugar tariff far outweigh the added costs of the imported necessities. Be that as it may, it is still apparent to even the most casual observer that Puerto Rican workers have been ground extremely fine between the upper

and the nether millstones, that is, between metropolitan industrial prices and colonial pre-industrial wages.

### *III. Haiti*

Haiti was for a long time one of the richest agricultural colonies in the New World. In the eighteenth century the income derived by the French from Haiti was several times greater than that which England took from the thirteen colonies combined. As a result of the revolt of the slaves, this export prosperity ceased and Haiti did not follow the pattern, common to almost all Latin America during the nineteenth century, of an aristocratic land-owning class lording it over a great mass of peons. In Haiti, the former slaves became peasants rather than serfs, and their vigorous leaders made them realize that freedom did not mean merely freedom from work. Sonthonax, in his great speech in 1793 on the duties of liberty, cried that "in France all are free, yet everyone works."

In comparing present conditions in Haiti with the rich plantation export economy of 1789, it must be kept in mind that: (1) the newly freed slaves became landholders, but they lacked capital, technical instruction, and experience in small plot farming; (2) the new country was forced to pay France an indemnity of 60 million francs which otherwise could have been used to buy the tools and the technical skills wherewith to effect salutary changes in the economy; (3) the hostility of much of the rest of the world—all slave-holding at the time the Haitian Republic was founded—manifested itself in denying Haitian products a market, thus condemning the country to commercial stagnation and self-sufficiency.

The feeling of security of the small owner-operator has probably been a factor in the rapid increase in population. The cultivation of tiny fields on steep mountainsides has assuredly been a boon to the erosive activities of tropical downpours. But the greater the increase in population, the greater the pressure to clear more and more small farms on steeper and steeper mountain slopes, and thus the circle continues. Thus the country is neither able to produce a huge export crop nor to become self-sufficient. As one shrewd observer said, "Haiti has neither a one-crop nor a self-sufficient

economy—rather it has a bite-your-nails economy” It is an orphan in the international market.

#### IV. Cuba

Fortunately for Cuba, Columbus did not find much gold on that island, and as a result early settlers had to turn to agriculture. Those Cubans who stayed on the island during the conquest of Mexico made money breeding cattle and horses to be used by the conquistadores. Within a century the cattle ranchers felt as secure in their position as did the members of the *Honrado Consejo de Mesta*, that guild of Spanish sheepmen who for so long tyrannized the small farmer of Spain. But they were not without competitors, for from the very beginning the sugar planters were favored by legislation as well as by cash bonuses and subsidies. Prosperity was with the sugar planters until the nineteenth century, when subsidized beet sugar made increasing inroads into the cane-sugar market, and when costs on the plantations had to be reduced. At the same time slaves were becoming more expensive and more and more inclined to revolt. Crops which competed with cane were not slow in putting in their appearance.

The big event in the history of coffee in Cuba was the arrival of the French fleeing from Haiti after the revolt of the slaves in 1791. One of the secrets of the economic and cultural success of the coffee plantation in Cuba was that it was of family size, requiring relatively little capital but much care, and therefore the coffee growers lived on their estates, in contrast with the cattle ranchers, who were largely absentee. In a short time the French developed small but flourishing coffee plantations in regions where the extensive grazing of cattle had been almost the only activity. But how was the market to expand? Intercolonial trade was forbidden by Spain. Money from the Viceroyalty of Mexico was remitted to La Habana to make up the annual deficit in the cost of the civil and military administration of Cuba; yet there was, as of January 14, 1815, a duty of 24 pesos the hundredweight placed on all merchandise entering Mexico from Cuba. This effectively kept out Cuban coffee, which at the time was selling in La Habana for only four pesos the hundredweight. The Royal Order of February

10, 1818, officially opening the ports of Cuba to foreign vessels, gave added impetus to the island's already flourishing commerce—much of which had been contraband. But the civil wars of the nineteenth century destroyed agriculture and commerce, and after the Civil War of 1895, which gave the *coup de grâce* to agricultural prosperity in Cuba, the ruined coffee plantations were replanted for the most part in subsistence crops or in sugar cane, or they were left to grow up in worthless brush.

When the political ties with Spain were finally severed, big corporations became interested in the sugar and tobacco industry, which experienced what Professor Toynbee might call a "dynamic Yang" phase of development. The coffee industry was completely neglected. During the first thirty-five years of the republic, Cuba even imported coffee, to a total value of \$102,230,984. But the terrible depression in the sugar industry that followed World War I fulfilled the prophecy of the Cuban patriot, Martí, who, only a quarter of a century before, had warned: "A people commits suicide on the day it trusts to one crop for its subsistence."

Coffee, sugar, tobacco, cattle raising—each, in the economy of Cuba, has had a history of successive phases of growth and decline, but the land-tenure pattern established four hundred years ago persists over large areas to this day; on the one hand 2,336 latifundia (estates of 1,235 acres or more) account for 47 per cent of all the privately owned land in Cuba, 90 per cent of the total extent of which is uncultivated, while 157,622 farms (*fincas*), 40,000 of which are intensively cultivated, occupy the other 53 per cent. The large holdings grew larger on some of the most fertile land as sugar became the dominant crop, and larger but fewer mills demanded more and more cane; but the "dance of the millions" in the early 1920's was followed by a terrific depression. The government stepped in with a high-tariff act (1927) which greatly stimulated the production of dairy products, meat, poultry and eggs, coffee and potatoes. A case in point: in 1927 Cuba imported 5,000,000 pounds of cheese, but in 1941 domestic production increased to 9,000,000 pounds, of which one million pounds were exported. Increases in domestic production mean more work for Cubans: The 28,836 farms specializing in meat production in 1946 employed more than 100,000 workers, with a total payroll of \$14,000,000. This increased purchasing power in the hands of a

growing number of Cubans is used to buy locally grown foodstuffs and the products of modest household industries. Many of the small farms and industries are owned and operated by Gallegos or Isleños (Canary Islanders) or their descendants who have so successfully transplanted in the New World their Old World traditions of thrift and hard work. A middle class would seem to be in process of formation in Cuba.

By way of concluding these paragraphs on Cuba, a quotation from Sir William Van Horne, builder of the Canadian Pacific and of the Cuban railroad systems, seems pertinent. He wrote to General Wood as follows:

A system of land-taxation is the most effective and equitable way of securing the greatest possible utilization of lands, and affords at the same time the best safeguard against holding lands in disuse for speculative purposes. It affords, moreover, the most certain and uniform revenue to the state. Freedom from land taxation comes from landlordism, which you certainly do not wish to continue or promote in Cuba. The country can only reach its highest prosperity and greatest stability of government through the widest possible ownership of the lands by the people who cultivate them.<sup>4</sup>

Many foreign nations have political or economic enclaves on the Caribbean islands. Islands close to each other in space, or even parts of the same island, may be incorporated into the economies of distant countries, their well-being dependent upon the whims of overseas consumers and pressure groups of many different lands. Geographic specialization is the *summum bonum*, the ideal—other things being equal. But things are not equal when the very diet of the farmers who produce for the international market is determined by distant foreigners. A certain amount of diversification of crops is healthy in these days when foreign markets are unstable. But as long as diversification of crops is preached while the big money is to be made in one-crop farming, the sermon will go unheeded. Even such islands as remain politically independent are buffeted about on the rough seas of the international market, tossed between the Scylla of self-sufficiency, with a low standard of living, and the Charybdis of monoculture, with a resultant colonial economic status.

<sup>4</sup> Leland H. Jenks, *Our Cuban Colony*, New York, 1928, p. 153.



Dr. Carlos E. Chardón, outstanding Puerto Rican scholar, aptly sums up the situation in his penetrating paper on "The Caribbean Island Economy":

We must consider first that the Caribbean is a *geographical region*; and, second, that we are dealing also with a series of *political entities*. For more than three centuries the political patterns have prevailed over the geographic reality, which has brought about a disarticulated economy among islands forming part of an archipelago. In considering separately the political units and their problems, by far the majority of students have neglected the fact that in a sound economy the political units (without interference with their sovereignties or those of the metropolitan governments) may in many cases play an important economic role with reference to the economy of the others. So far, efforts have been isolated and fragmentary; the perspective of the whole has been ignored, and each country, or each colony or group of colonies, has fought its own battle, trying to solve its problems independently. This reminds us of the man who failed to see the forest for the trees.<sup>5</sup>

### V. Venezuela

Freedom from Spain meant little to the serfs and slaves in Venezuela, but when Bolívar and Páez offered them land and personal freedom they flocked to the republican banner. When these promises were not fulfilled there followed a century of upheaval and revolution. The rural farm worker fought in the disastrous civil wars, mainly because he hoped to acquire a piece of land of his own. The battle cry was, often enough, to "make a homeland (*patria*) for the Negroes and Indians"—those still at the base of the pyramid. Only a few urban dwellers seemed to worry much about such a vague intangible thing as federalism; the rural dwellers followed Ezequiel Zamora and Martín Espinoza because these leaders promised something tangible: land.

In more recent times, the Dictator Gómez was an *hacendado* par excellence, having acquired huge estates all over the country, particularly for the pasturing of cattle. When he died in 1935 many felt that his great holdings would be made available to the people in some way; instead, to a large extent, they have been put under the administration of bureaucrats who are costing the country

<sup>5</sup> *Scientific Monthly*, LXIX, no. 3 (Sept., 1949), p. 169.

fabulous sums each year. And age-old farming techniques are unchanged. Many actual abuses continue as before. In the hacienda of Manuare the workers receive payment in counters (*fichas*), valid only for the high-priced goods in the hacienda store. The "Jefe Civil of the Distrito," Carlos Arvelo, telegraphed the newspaper, *Esfera*, that "thousands of rural workers suffer in the living flesh the black rigors of their destiny," and that the peons on the hacienda of El Trompillo were "corroded and exasperated by a big Grievance"—the lack of land, seeds, and agricultural implements.<sup>6</sup> Ricardo Mandry, a Catholic priest, wrote in the same paper:

Latifundismo still exists. The former critics of Gómez are the most greedy in grabbing the estates of the deceased Dictator. A very few people have been favored in the dividing up of the estates.

We have visited almost all of the "haciendas" of the Municipality of Tocuyito and some of Guigue. We have talked at length with hundreds of peons and visited their huts. It would take but few words to put in motion the great mass of discontented people. When there is hunger in the stomach there is revolt in the heart.<sup>7</sup>

Farmers, generally illiterate or barely able to sign their names, have been victimized so long that they are very suspicious of the motives of any outsider. Their usual attitude was well expressed by a man near Mérida, whose little plot of ground was being made the subject of an intensive study in land utilization. Pictures were duly taken of the tiny fields, the yoke of oxen, the house, and the family. After this was done the wife asked timidly if she might have a picture, and was told that one would be sent her husband from Caracas, where the films were to be developed. But when the head of the house was asked to give his name, he stubbornly refused, saying, "dar la firma es una cosa seria."<sup>8</sup> Only after it was carefully explained that what was wanted was his name, given orally and not in writing, did he reluctantly give it, and then only when urged by his wife and children. Such an attitude is the product of several centuries of dealings with shysters of all kinds:

<sup>6</sup> *Esfera*, Caracas, Venezuela, Aug. 2, 1939.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, May 12, 1939.

<sup>8</sup> "It's a serious matter to give one's signature."

lawyer, quack doctors, usurers, and highhanded storekeeper-landlords.

An agrarian reform does not necessarily imply violent confiscation of all privately held land, but rather a gradual dissolution of great absentee holdings, especially if they are being used uneconomically from the point of view of modern needs and of technical efficiency. To break up into small plots those haciendas on level fertile ground which have already attained a high degree of efficiency in the production of sugar cane and cotton, for instance, would be not only uneconomical but anti-social. But where the small, relatively self-sufficient farmers or the market gardeners could thrive, land should be available for them, particularly in a country with as much unoccupied land as Venezuela. And they should have security of tenure. Many farmers at present are settled on unused private land or on what they think is public land. But they do not plant lemon, orange, or avocado trees, or any slow-maturing crops, because experience has taught them that once any land is improved, someone will show up with a title to it and reap the benefits of their hard work. Merely making land available to the landless is not enough. They should be granted credit with which to build decent houses and to buy good implements and seeds, and they should have technical assistance in growing and marketing crops with which they have had little experience. If not, they will simply fall an easy prey to the usurer, to the storekeeper, to the *hacendado*, and again become part of the floating proletariat.

On many an hacienda throughout the country, people are living outside the modern money economy. They do the routine chores of the hacienda; they put in long hours during the coffee-picking season, for example, but are not too busy the rest of the year. They are given a plot of land on which to raise subsistence crops, and they also get a new garment occasionally, and salt, sugar, and other necessities which they cannot produce on their plot of land. But they are rather securely tied to the hacienda by these economic bonds, and it is too much to expect that such people will begin anything new in the way of farming techniques. One man near Mérida said that he had planted a few grains of wheat on his plot and that they did pretty well. When asked why he did not plant more, he replied, with that significant Latin American gesture of

rubbing the fingers together, that he lacked *lo principal*—the main thing, namely, cash. And under the present setup he will never be able to accumulate much cash, and never be in a position to improve, or try to improve, his lot.

If rents were generally lowered, renters could begin to save in order to raise their standard of living and to improve their farming techniques. There should be a minimum time limit in all leases so that the renter could not be summarily evicted from land on which he had spent time and money in improvements.

Living conditions in the rural areas are very primitive. The little thatch-roofed hut has walls of wattle-and-daub and a tamped-earth floor. The cooking is done on the floor, in one corner. Wood smoke fills the house most of the time, since there is no chimney. Frequently there is not one stick of furniture. The family sleeps in some dirty hammocks, or huddled together on the floor on dried, untanned cowhides. Cooking utensils are few; the only "store-bought" article, carefully treasured, may be a large iron or earthen pot. Gourds and old tin cans make up the rest of the kitchen equipment. Rudimentary ideas of sanitation have never been heard of; drinking water is never boiled; privies are unknown. Sickness is rampant and the rate of infant mortality shockingly high.

Small wonder that rural dwellers hate the country and at the first opportunity leave for the oil fields or towns, where conditions are indeed bad—85 per cent of the workers' children in Caracas are undernourished—but better than they are in the country. The government cannot stop this rural exodus except by measures more repressive than those that regulated the movement of serfs on manorial holdings during the Middle Ages. How important is the solution of the problem presented by the subsistence farmer is shown by the conclusion of the federal sub-commission which investigated the flight from the farm: "As long as the *campesino* is not offered a reasonable standard of living on the land, all measures to prevent the migration to the cities will fail. The personal conveniences and well-being within reach of the man in the city will mean more to him than the sentimental and patriotic reasons with which he may be urged to remain in his present miserable condition."

There has been not only a concentration of land, but a concentration of the *best* land, in the hands of a few. The rich heavy soils on the floors of valleys, fertile terraces, and gently rolling foothills

have all been monopolized as pasturelands. The small cultivators, the *conuqueros*, have been forced to cultivate the higher, steeper, less fertile slopes, where they look down upon the rich valley bottoms devoted almost entirely to extensive cattle grazing. Much land now used for the growing of food crops could more appropriately be in pastures or woodlands, and large areas now in pastures are ideally suited for intensive agriculture. For instance, the valley of the Tuy River, within easy reach of Caracas by railroad, as well as by a highway in good condition, could supply the capital with an abundance of cheap foodstuffs. But the land of this fertile valley is largely in the hands of about a dozen families, and has for generations been used as pastureland for the fattening of lean steers from the Llanos, the great grass plains of the Orinoco Basin. These manorial holdings are family heirlooms, the incomes from which enable the owners to live in Caracas in the style to which they have always been accustomed. The logical thing would be for this valley to become a market garden for Caracas, whereas cattle grazing, perhaps on artificial pastures, would be carried on farther from the Capitol. But the landholders make a comfortable living under conditions as they are, and are not interested in trying to raise the per unit productivity of their land by the introduction of intensive farming techniques. Thus the "dead hand" influence of land concentration first fosters, then crystallizes social and economic stagnation.

One of the most striking examples of the reversals of pattern in an urbo-rural cultural landscape as a result of land concentrated in few hands is to be seen in the environs of San Cristóbal, in Táchira, Venezuela. A few families for generations have controlled almost every square foot of land for several miles in all directions from the very edge of town. The result is that all the fertile alluvial soil and the gently sloping hill lands near town are in pasture, whereas the minutely subdivided and intensively cultivated fields of the small landholders are on the less fertile and more steeply sloping hill lands many miles from town. Except along the highway, all the produce from the area of intensive cultivation has to be transported on the backs of humans, donkeys, or mules, across the extensively exploited pasturelands to the market in town.

The basis of efficient intensive agriculture is the regular use of fertilizers and the systematic rotation of crops, but the small farmer

of the hill lands and mountains is too poor to buy chemical fertilizers and he does not have enough land or capital to afford to keep animals, whose manure would be so valuable. The cattle rancher, on the other hand, has so much rich land that he does not have to be interested in intensification in the use of his land to the extent of stall feeding of soilage crops and of using the manure for restoring the fertility of the soil. The use of fertile, level land for pasture and of the steep infertile hill lands and mountain slopes for intensive agriculture means that the basic industry, from which a great majority of the people make their living, is suffering from a dangerously split personality—altitudinally speaking it is upside down, and spatially it is schizophrenic.

It is very difficult to get efficient agricultural methods adopted widely as long as food production remains to so great an extent in the hands of shifting agriculturalists who have neither the capital nor the education to modernize. If general political and economic insecurity were dispelled, food production could be organized along efficient lines, for although the network of political frontiers guarded by tariffs and immigration restrictions constitutes an economic monstrosity and a political calamity, smaller nations, to survive, must resort to these devices if their larger neighbors do so. Although it is within man's power to produce all his food requirements with infinitely less effort than is at present expended, government policies are of necessity influenced by nationalism and unemployment. The adoption of scientific methods of food production would mean that present output could certainly be maintained, or even increased, while less land would be cultivated and fewer men be employed. Poorer lands would be abandoned to forestry, and the rural exodus would be accentuated; but the people as a whole would certainly benefit in the long run. A planned agriculture, with controlled imports, guaranteed prices, and ultimately some check on over-production, may be necessary, but the various schemes should be administered for the benefit of the various national units as a whole, not with the object of maintaining an out-of-date farming structure. Worship of "Blut und Boden" should not be so great as to blind political leaders to the fact that the goal is increased agricultural production, which does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of men with machetes

## VI. Mexico

Mexico is a land of distant horizons. The great plateaus of the interior, which are high enough to have a temperate climate and where as a result most of the population is concentrated, are hemmed in by the far horizon of a purple mountain chain. But Mexico is not all a volcano-girdled plateau. It is built up in climatic layers, or strata: the hot lands (*tierra caliente*) around the edges, then the cool or temperate lands (*tierra templada*), and the cold, high mountains (the *tierra fría* or *páramos*). But these are not easily delimited regions. Streams have cut great gashes in the form of canyons into the central plateau so that there is a complex interpenetration of one climatic region by the other. The result is that the sharpest contrast in land forms, climate, and the cultural landscape are found very close together. From one point it is often possible to view areas representative of almost all the major climatic types, from the tropical rain forest to the tundra: from the fertile valley bottoms, where bananas and oranges grow, up through coffee plantations to the dry mesa country, where maguey, maize, and barley grow, and still on as far as the eye can reach through the grazing lands, then the timberlands, and, finally, to the slopes eternally covered with snow. In this dovetailing of climatic regions and cultural landscapes lies one of the many attractions of Mexico.

Against this background of sharp physical contrasts there has been an interplay of the many forces—social, cultural, racial, economic—which have gone toward the molding of present-day Mexico. During the regime of the dictator, Porfirio Díaz, the industrial policies of modern nations were adopted in Mexico without destroying the feudal structure of the Mexican economic organization. Foreign trade increased from \$63,000,000 in 1885 to \$239,000,000 in 1907, and railway mileage increased from almost nil in the seventies to 16,000 miles at the close of Díaz' regime. But this industrialization was paralleled by a rapid increase in the cost of living without a corresponding rise in wages. The oil fields and mines were largely foreign-owned, and profits from them left the country.

*The Hacienda*—The full flowering of the hacienda system occurred during the Díaz regime. The land of Mexico, the support of the great mass of the population, was in the hands of a very few

people. Some 60 per cent of the private land in Mexico was owned in estates of 2,500 acres or more, and almost 25 per cent of the privately owned land was in the hands of only 114 proprietors. Furthermore, the process of concentration of land in the hands of a few was continuing. Villages were deprived of their communal holdings through the encroachment of "colonization" companies, or through the manipulation of water rights by a *hacendado*. Such a landlord might boast blandly of having moved the *mojonera*, the boundary post of a village *ejido* with water rights to a certain stream, which the *hacendado* thereafter diverted to his own estate. Feuds over land often had at the root a feud over water. Land was also taken away from "rebellious" villages—particularly Indian villages with good land—by the government, often controlled by the local landlord. As a result, the inhabitants of what had once been free villages were gradually forced to become wage laborers on the haciendas, where they were soon tied to the soil by debts and were paid in kind rather than in money in the hacienda store—the infamous *tienda de raya*.

Living conditions on the estates were very bad; food was often in short supply, and housing was primitive at best. As years passed, the hapless people, landless and wretched, became apathetic, morally bankrupt, spiritually insolvent. Their resignation for many years to their seemingly hopeless lot was well depicted in his poetry by the great voice of Indian America, José Santos Chocano:

*Indio que labras con fatiga  
tierras que de otros dueños son:  
¿ ignoras tú que deben tuyas ser,  
por tu sangre y tu sudor?  
¿ Ignoras tú qué audaz codicia  
siglos atrás, te las quitó?  
¿ ignoras tú que eres el Amo . . . ?  
¡ Quién sabe, señor!*

But the semi-serfs gradually realized that any change would be for the better, and the cry of the landless for *tierra y libertad* (land and liberty) became more and more insistent. Revolution broke out in 1910, and in the next eleven years more than a million and a half people moved from the great estates to the free villages; they fled from their landlords during the period of social and political



upheaval in order to return to the free villages where they could till their small plots of land under the age-old system of communal tenure. The old landholding aristocracy thus lost some of its power to the village, to agricultural workers, and to the newly developed city proletariat.

*Land Distribution*—At first land distribution proceeded slowly. In 1930, fifteen years after the inauguration of the agrarian reform, almost seven-tenths of the total economically active population engaged in agriculture still belonged to the disinherited landless masses dependent upon day wages or upon such meager earnings as may be derived from tenant farming or sharecropping. President Cárdenas saw that the aims of the Revolution of 1910 had not been completely fulfilled largely because there was no middle class to carry them through. Hence, he speeded up the program of land distribution. In the first twenty months of his administration he awarded some 3,000 villages, nearly four and one-half million hectares (about 10,000,000 acres) of land—over half as much land as had been distributed by all his predecessors together.

By 1945, 30,619,321 hectares (77,000,000 acres) had been distributed to 1,732,062 recipients. About one-fourth of this land was crop land; while three-fourths was pasture, woodland, mountains, and waste. The average recipient has received only about 10 acres of cropland, and only a very small part of this was irrigated land. Agrarian communities have been organized into *ejidos* with the result that, according to the census of 1940, there were 1,601,392 *ejidatarios*. The population living on *ejidos* in 1940 numbered 4,992,058 inhabitants, or one-fourth the inhabitants of Mexico.<sup>9</sup> The *ejidatarios* now have possession of about half of the crop land in the nation. In addition, there were 928,583 small private landholders in 1940 having plots of twelve acres, or less, in size. It is estimated that at least 40 per cent of the total population of Mexico either lives on *ejidos* or on small, privately owned holdings having 12 acres or less. Some of the expected benefits of the reforms have been absorbed in supporting the rapidly increasing population. It is significant that the Rockefeller Foundation, working in close cooperation with the Mexican Government on its Mexican Agricultural Program, has two major objectives: (1) fundamental

<sup>9</sup> Nathan Whetten, *Rural Mexico*, Chicago, 1948, p. 592.

research on methods and materials valuable to increased production of Mexico's basic food crops; and (2) a training program for selected Mexican scientists.

The social revolution in Mexico has largely destroyed the feudal environment. Much of the land has now been redistributed to the people who work it, in response to the government's goal of "land for the landless." Much has been done to achieve the "emancipation and incorporation of the Indian masses": educational facilities are rapidly being extended and transportation systems developed; minimum wages and working conditions have been established; social welfare legislation has been enacted. In spite of these basic reforms, the levels of living among the masses of the population are still very low; but they have been raised. Millions of people who formerly had next to nothing now have next to something—which involves a fundamental change in living and in outlook. Mass despair has given way to hope in the hearts of millions, the channels of social mobility have opened, and the hewers of wood and the drawers of water have a chance of rising to middle-class status. It is to be hoped that the redistribution of land will be more and more carefully planned, for the social and political advantages of breaking up large holdings tend to be ephemeral and illusory unless farmers are in a position to make a good livelihood from their new holdings and to set aside capital for improvement.

### *VII. Conclusions*

With few exceptions capital wealth in the circum-Caribbean countries has tended to be employed in activities which were not labor-producing enterprises. Wealth made from the land has in large part been either exported or invested in urban real estate or in commercial enterprises which yield high returns; it is neither ploughed back into agriculture nor is it used to develop new wealth-producing resources. Capital has been used as income instead of as capital to produce more wealth, and the income has been largely devoted to increasing a comparatively few family fortunes at home or corporate earnings abroad. This wealth, controlled by a very thin upper stratum, is not infrequently used in the glittering national or international capitals for conspicuous consumption rather

than in founding new industries or in increasing the productivity of agriculture.

And not only is capital drained off the land. Few of the families who were originally responsible for the development of the agricultural operations, the backbone of the economies of the Caribbean countries, have stayed on the land. They migrate to the cities or abroad, and if they continue to manage their properties, it is on an absentee basis. Except where the plantation has taken over, agriculture has remained a relatively unremunerative proposition for the great majority. The modern progressive-looking urban centers are in marked contrast to so many rural areas where roads and schools are lacking. Dwellers in many solitary ranchos or dreary agglomerations of a few houses, without hope, without a future, in an access of wishful thinking, call their establishments "La Esperanza" or "El Porvenir."

Thus both wealth and leadership are drained from the countryside, and the rural industries and factories, which help to balance an economy and which normally evolve with a healthy agricultural development, have not put in their appearance. Both capital and "know-how" are necessary for the many industries which process agricultural products: slaughterhouses, quick-freeze and refrigerated warehouses, dairies and cheese factories, vegetable processing plants, rice and coffee hullers, and so on. Such industries would have built up the countries: roads and railroads would have been constructed, growing cities would have absorbed the surplus rural population, growth in other industries would be stimulated, in an upward spiral. But those few nationals with wealth and a willingness to invest it have avoided industrial enterprises and have preferred rather to engage in business as importers and merchants, where a minimum of capital is required, little risk is involved, and the return is high.

But not only have wealth and leadership migrated from the countryside. The most enterprising and ambitious of the rural laborers have deserted and are continuing to desert the land to seek more highly paid (or, at least, *paid*) employment and better living opportunities in urban centers. It will be difficult to make general agriculture a profitable undertaking which will attract capital and at the same time compete for labor on a reasonably even footing with urban employment. If a method could be found

whereby profits to the producer as well as wages to the laborer could be augmented, agriculture would be on the way to becoming a middle-class enterprise. But rural living conditions will have to be made much more attractive than they are in most areas at present if the energetic, intelligent, and ambitious agriculturalists are to be held on the farm.

But how is the cost of living to be lowered if profits to the producer are to be increased and agricultural wages are to be raised? It is suggested that the spread between the price the farmer receives for his produce and the price the consumer ultimately pays might be due to the antiquated distributing and marketing methods employed. Producer and consumer cooperatives might help eliminate some of these unnecessary costs. Although the Federación Nacional de Cafeteros of Colombia is an organization of producers of an export crop, its members reap substantial economic and social benefits, and it is worthy of study in regard to the problem of improving techniques of distribution and marketing. Each regional or national unit in the Caribbean area might profitably make a complete survey of the costs of production and the practices of marketing foodstuffs, in order to see where cost prices might be improved for the producer and where they might be lowered for the consumer.

The stagnation of agriculture and the lack of industrial growth have perhaps contributed to the dearth of technically and professionally trained people, for the same thin upper stratum which has controlled the largest share of the nation's capital has been the only part of the population that has had the time and money necessary to acquire training in law, in medicine, in education, in literature, in commerce, in politics, and so on. Hence in proportion to the population, there is a marked lack of scientists, educators, engineers, medical men, and industrial leaders; yet without them it will be hard for the nations to flourish and show vigorous growth.

It would seem that a reversal of the trend, whereby wealth is drained abroad or into the big cities, is indicated if the regional and national economies are to become vigorous. A good start has been made in various countries, where only a specified amount of the income from investment can be taken out of the country each year. The remainder must be left there. It is not confiscated; it

simply cannot leave the country. The result is that this idle capital soon gets restless lying in the bank and wants to go to work. And its owner puts it to work by establishing new industries locally or by enlarging small antiquated plants already in operation. More wealth is thereby created. A family of my acquaintance is now happy that a part of its huge income was impounded and did not get abroad where it would have melted rapidly as a result of heavy taxes. The capital thus accumulated in the republic of their adoption was reinvested there and has further enriched the country as well as the family.

Formerly the foreign interests teamed up with the governing elite to exploit the raw materials from the Caribbean countries in the developed countries overseas, and spent the bulk of the profits abroad. This process is becoming more and more difficult. The masses are becoming politically conscious to the extent that even dictators feel that they must advertise themselves as the friend of the laboring man. In spite of repeated setbacks in the striving toward democracy on the part of the Caribbean countries and islands, the long-range trend has not been affected. Tyranny and chaos have been on the wane as those peoples have achieved marked improvement in economic and social welfare, *pari passu* with the development of responsible political behavior. And it is in order at this point to mention the change that has taken place in the attitude of the United States, in particular, vis-à-vis the Caribbean; the era of the big stick, to be wielded by the strong, has been followed by one of cooperation and good will between sovereign states. In the Organization of American States, the juridical equality of all the American republics is accepted, whereas intervention in the affairs of any is abjured.

Political independence without economic independence is fickle, if not actually fictitious, and economic independence in the modern world is hardly to be thought of without an accumulated national capital reserve. Monies to make up this reserve cannot be extracted from self-sufficient subsistence farmers who live on the margin of national or insular economies, nor can they be levied either from day laborers or peons on estates, who live from hand to mouth. It would seem that individuals and corporations that are at present exploiting on a large scale the fertile agricultural land and the rich mineral deposits can expect a rising tax rate, which will mean

that they will pay the lion's share of the cost of those services for which governments are increasingly held responsible. It is not too difficult to replace the traditional paternalism of the landlord or of the big company by a paternalism of the state as long as state benefits are gradually filtering down to ever lower economic strata. Peasants and workers eagerly support the state which raises their level of living, even if only slightly. And as natural resources are increasingly used for economic-social rather than for economic-military developments, the traditional "strong" government will be increasingly supplanted by the more popular variety. Mexico is a good example of a state which has, in the words of Frank Tannenbaum, achieved "peace by revolution":

*It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose;  
The land, where, girt with friends or foes,  
A man may speak the thing he will;  
A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent.*

—Tennyson, "You Ask Me Why, Tho' Ill at Ease."



Maynard Phelps: TECHNICAL "KNOW-HOW"  
VERSUS FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

AS THIS is a round-table meeting my function, as I see it, is to raise a number of issues which will elicit discussion among you, perhaps to be somewhat provocative. The title selected for this paper may have that effect as it appears to be contradictory. We are accustomed to thinking of the export of technology as one of the principal features of foreign investment. The fact that capital and technology are usually combined in direct investments is considered one of their chief advantages over portfolio investments, both to the foreign investors themselves and to the countries in which the investments are made. With this conclusion I am in substantial agreement. In direct investments the two are almost inseparable if the investments are to be "operated" rather than simply "held" for appreciation in value. Still it may be useful for purposes of analysis, initially at least, to think of the export of technology and of capital as separate movements and even in opposition one to the other.

One reason for so doing is that they have been too closely connected in the minds of those people in the other American republics whose hopes for more immediate and extensive economic development were aroused by the Point Four pronouncement. It is not a "bold, new program" as first announced, but rather an extension or accentuation of a program which has been underway for many years. If President Truman had said that we have been cooperating with the other American republics in the fields of

public health, agriculture, and industrial development, among others, for many years, that significant results have been attained, and that we propose to accentuate and extend the program to other parts of the world, there would have been little misunderstanding. But, at least in part, because of the manner of announcement, it was misunderstood by many people, both at home and abroad. Unfortunately, to them Point Four meant immediate and large-scale financial aid, somewhat on the order of the Marshall Plan. But, as you know, the two programs are essentially different in concept and objectives. Therefore, one of the first problems of the Department of State, and a most difficult one, was to dissociate the export of technology and that of foreign investment, as much as possible, in the thinking of other peoples; to indicate that the export of technology may require very little concurrent capital investment abroad. Yet another fact should have been emphasized, namely, that scientific management is greatly needed in underdeveloped countries, perhaps even more than technology.

People often confuse pure science, technology, and scientific management. They do not see the distinction between pure science and applied science. The aim of science is to discover new knowledge, new principles. In contrast, the aim of technology is to invent new devices, to develop new processes and techniques. New developments in technology are based upon additional knowledge uncovered by research scientists. We, as a people, have not been particularly successful in scientific discoveries. For instance, the basic discoveries of radar and atomic energy were made in Britain and Germany. But we have been effective in making practical use of basic principles, often discovered by others. Over a fifty-year span only twenty Nobel Prizes in physics, chemistry, and medicine were awarded United States citizens, while 119 were awarded to Europeans—thirty-six to Germans alone. However, in the field of technology, as such, we have been very effective, and it is this knowledge which is most needed in underdeveloped countries.

These countries likewise need to understand and apply the principles of scientific management, which may roughly be defined as social science applied to economic ends. Businessmen in the other American republics need more understanding of "how to do things most easily," and this involves both technology and scientific



management. It is not a question of working harder, which was always the answer of the old horse "Major" in George Orwell's satire on socialism, *Animal Farm*, but one of how to get economic tasks done more easily and with less labor.

It has been the traditional policy of the United States to place no barriers against the export of these two most important "commodities"—technology and scientific management. The significance of this policy has neither been sufficiently understood nor stressed. Such a policy has not been followed at all times, by all nations. The British, for instance, after the American Revolution, attempted, by every possible means, to withhold the exportation of the technology of the textile industry from the colonies. Laws were passed prohibiting the export of any plans or drawings used in the machinery of manufacturing, and efforts were made to prevent the emigration of factory workers or others who had knowledge of the construction of textile machinery.

Restriction of this character is adverse to our accepted policy of not withholding either technical knowledge or specialized equipment from other countries, other than for reasons of security. It might be noted in passing that our policy of furnishing technology to the U.S.S.R. during World War II, in the light of the present situation, appears to have been most unwise. Yet I am not one of those people who believe that our present difficulties with the U.S.S.R. could easily have been foreseen. At least there appears to be no valid reason at present for withholding technology from the other American republics, other than in a few cases involving security. The history of international trade has amply proven that, from an economic point of view, an industrialized nation has nothing to fear from industrialization and other economic development abroad. While the pattern of exports and imports will change, the history of foreign trade has amply proven that the volume of trade increases rather than decreases under such conditions, and that a higher level of living in both countries results.

In order to indicate the need both for technology and scientific management in other American republics, I want to comment briefly upon a particular case history. During my sojourn in Venezuela, in the early part of World War II, the Pan American building in Caracas, used by the American Embassy, was enlarged from two to four stories. The concrete was mixed outside my office

on the first floor, and was carried in the familiar once-used five-gallon oil cans to the upper stories by a large group of workers. Up and down they went, day after day, with cans of cement on their shoulders. Handling of materials in this manner is probably little different from the manner in which they were handled to build the pyramids. Witnessing such crude methods makes a person trained in management positively uncomfortable. A lift could have been installed without much difficulty to take the concrete to the upper stories at a substantial saving in manpower and, very probably, in cost likewise. If leaders in economically underdeveloped countries, and, in particular, the owners of small industrial establishments, people in the construction industry, and those who are engaged in the marketing of goods would take to heart the lesson of the Galbraith story in the movie "Cheaper By The Dozen," economic development throughout the world would be substantial without any influx of foreign capital.

The essential problem of economic development is to make *better* use, *continually*, of the various productive factors, that is, of economic resources. Of course, the supply of some factors, such as capital, may need to be supplemented from abroad if there is a relative scarcity of it and this scarcity is withholding development. Apparently, however, the fact that productive factors are in part substitutional is not sufficiently recognized. Capital goods are labor-saving devices. Obviously, the need for such devices depends, in most instances, upon the need for saving labor. It made good economic sense during the late war to build some of our airports abroad by mass labor, and others by the combined use of complicated earth-moving equipment and a minimum of labor. Labor was abundant and cheap in certain areas; scarce and costly in others. In peacetime the financial test of what is cheapest applies even more strongly. The justification of the importation of capital goods, therefore, depends largely upon the abundance of labor.

At times, admittedly, the financial test applied to the use of means for economic development must be set aside. Urgency of need may suggest that slower hand-labor methods should not be used on certain projects, even though labor is abundant. Some military and sanitary projects may be of this character. In this connection, I am reminded of the loan by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to India for the eradication

of kans grass. This deep-rooted grass is known to infest 10,000,000 acres in India of otherwise good agricultural land. Evidently, deep plowing with heavy tractors, plows, and ancillary equipment is the only practicable means for its eradication. India expects to reclaim 3,000,000 acres by this means over the next seven years. In this instance, hand labor, though abundant, was no match for capital equipment. Hence it was provided, through a loan, to do the job. Nevertheless, only simple equipment, such as wheelbarrows, small conveyors, and hand tools, not the equipment of Caterpillar and Le Tourneau, can often economically be justified on projects in underdeveloped countries.

It is not sufficiently recognized in underdeveloped countries that the flow of capital to them depends just as much upon their capacity and willingness to receive it as upon the capacity and willingness of other countries to make it available. Since the end of World War II there have been requests from many nations for assistance in economic development, but *very few* well-thought-out programs. The concept of the ability to receive capital implies the ability to use it productively. Raw materials for a project may be lacking, or of poor quality, or inaccessible. The demands of the market may be too small to permit economic production if the optimum size of the production unit is large. As previously indicated, there may be neither the necessary technology nor managerial ability available. If conditions are not such as to indicate the likelihood of successful operations and still the project goes ahead, productive factors will not be used wisely. *Economic development is not achieved through non-economic projects.*

Economic development is a process of slow growth. There must be a certain balance in that growth, a certain harmony in its various parts if it does not produce a distorted economic structure. Projects which are too far ahead of development in other fields cannot be justified. The construction of roads which lead nowhere in particular in an economic sense, and the development of power far in excess of what can presently be used, indicate incapacity to receive capital for these purposes. In contrast, a key piece of road between two expanding regions, or a substantial increase in the KWH capacity of an electric power installation where there is a pronounced power shortage, indicates capacity to receive capital. But the capacity to receive capital is much less than most people

think. In this connection the International Bank stated that "the most striking lesson which the Bank has learned in the course of its operations is how limited is the capacity of the underdeveloped countries to absorb capital quickly for really productive purposes."

While these concepts of growth and balance in economic facilities are not difficult to comprehend, they are difficult to apply in actual situations. Judgments must be made on the probable rate and direction of economic expansion. Yet there is usually altogether too little reliable information on which to base such judgments. The situation is further complicated by the fact that some economic units are not divisible in the sense that they can easily be adapted in size to the needs of a region. Then, also, the costs of building economic facilities per unit of output are usually less as their size increases. Thus, there is strong motivation for too great anticipation of needs, for building productive capacity much in excess of present demand. Nevertheless, when this is done the rate of economic development may be retarded rather than advanced, for productive factors may have been used unwisely.

Other factors also retard development in the other American republics. Recently we have become increasingly aware of the importance of proper attitudes toward economic activity. Those of us who are familiar with the economies of the other American nations feel that there often has been a lack of willingness on the part of citizens to commit their capital to economic projects; likewise, a lack of venturesomeness in economic affairs, of self-reliance, and of realistic planning for the future. In part, these attitudes are an outgrowth of the fact that the businessman and the technical expert are not accorded so high a social status as the lawyer, the large landowner, the physician, and the diplomat. Business has not drawn the most able people into its ranks, nor even its fair share. Industrial technology and business management are both highly respected in the United States, but they are not considered as high-level professions in the other American republics. Moreover, in the past two decades, there has been an increasingly unfavorable attitude toward direct foreign investments, other than under conditions unacceptable to investors. Finally, an improper attitude toward government which is an underlying cause of political instability is often present and retards economic development in many countries. These attitudes must change if economic de-

velopment is to proceed vigorously and along sound lines in the future.

The principal thesis of this short paper may now be clear. Succinctly stated, it is that technology, managerial proficiency, and favorable attitudes are particularly needed for economic development in the other American republics and, in general, more so than a large volume of additional capital. Let me hasten to add that variations among the republics on these matters, as on others, are very great indeed, and thus that generalizations are risky. Excellent work is being done to overcome deficiencies in these factors in a number of countries. Basically, of course, it is a problem of education and should be attacked as such. Those in charge of economic activities should be better prepared for their jobs. There is no lack of basic industrial aptitudes in the other American republics, but there is a dearth of really effective management.

The question arises of how these factors, which are so greatly needed for economic development, can best be secured. The problem is one which must be attacked on many fronts simultaneously. Both informal and formal education have an important place in the process. As informal education I would include the increase in understanding and proficiency secured as the inevitable result of foreign investment in productive facilities. In my opinion, this is the best, the most natural, "vehicle" for taking technology and managerial proficiency abroad. In the field of industrial development particularly, there is no good substitute for the knowledge and experience of private business enterprises. Yet this means is not being used as extensively as formerly. The amount of direct investment abroad by North American concerns since World War II, other than in the petroleum industry, has not been great. Efforts both by government entities and by private groups to stimulate direct investment continue, but they have not been successful. There is too much uncertainty involved. Private capital can adjust itself to many conditions, but not to extreme uncertainty. Receptivity of other nations toward investments within their borders has been at low ebb, and the barriers created to investment are formidable. Many informed people in the United States feel that discouragement of direct foreign investment is shortsighted policy, principally because it withholds the importation of technology and managerial proficiency, and, therefore, economic development.

Certain countries, notably Chile, have seen fit to go direct to the market for the employment of technical and managerial skills. At one time *Corporación de Fomento de la Producción de Chile* was currently employing 160 United States technicians and management experts as full-time consultants in a number of fields. At times the Export-Import Bank and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development have made use of technical consultants as a condition precedent to the granting of loans for certain projects. By this means considerable technical knowledge has been exported to other countries. Government experts in the fields of public health, agriculture, education, and public administration, to name only a few, have been made available, many of them, as you know, under Public Law No. 63, of 1938. Cooperation in the fields of public health and agriculture has been outstanding in its results.

The most recently announced and the most widely publicized plan for cooperation is the Point Four Program. In principle, the program is sound and fully capable of justification. Our greater concern is with its administration. The problems involved are difficult ones and the opportunities present for unwise decisions and for "busy work," which has no practical application, are many. However, our experience, both fortunate and unfortunate, with the projects of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific and Cultural Cooperation, and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs should stand us in good stead. These projects featured technical cooperation and assistance. It must be reiterated that the Point Four Program is of the same general character as the programs of these other organizations and not a program of foreign investment.

The principal problem involved is the one of finding suitable personnel for assignments abroad. In this connection, Willard Thorp, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, made the following statement:

It is difficult to know how many such people can be found, but this factor more than any other has been responsible for determining the size of the request made by the administration to the American Congress. Actually, the estimates underlying the request provide for 2,445 experts, of whom 1,921 are estimated to come from the United States. This may seem like a relatively small

number of individuals, particularly if one thinks of the many countries involved and the many fields of knowledge. However, if one thinks of it in terms of locating the individuals, fitting them into the projects, and actually getting them to work, it is obviously a tremendous undertaking.\*

To anyone familiar with the problems of recruitment, selection, and training for these assignments, likewise with the problems involved in creating conditions in other countries under which those assigned can work effectively, even a modest Point Four Program appears to be a formidable undertaking. While the nation is actively rearming to meet the threat of Communism, the difficulties of carrying forward the program are greatly accentuated. It is unlikely that many technologists or management experts can be spared for work abroad in the months ahead, unless their work contributes to the common defense. Nor will placement of the program under the aegis of the United Nations Organization lessen the difficulties encountered or make the administration of the program easier. It may relieve us of charges of officiousness and economic meddling which may at times have been deserved. Nevertheless, if the program is prosecuted as vigorously as world conditions permit, if it is kept within the proper channels and well administered, it holds much hope for the future.

Finally, there is no good substitute for formal education in technology and management. Technical schools, trade schools, agricultural colleges, and schools of business administration are greatly needed in the other American republics, and those now in operation need strengthening. If it is recognized that economic development is, in large measure, a product of education, assistance in providing buildings, staff, and libraries may be forthcoming. Training, such as that given in the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences at Turrialba, Costa Rica, and through the agricultural program of the Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico, will do more in the long run to stimulate sound economic growth than any other type of effort. While the need is not so apparent, formal training is also needed in the technology and management of industry, and must soon be provided if the levels of living are to be substantially improved in the other American republics.

\* Willard L. Thorp, "Practical Problems of Point Four," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (July, 1950), p. 98.

Manuel A. Mesa: LATIN AMERICA LOOKS AT  
INTER-AMERICAN TRADE

*(Translated by Julio Morales and David Hellyer)*

**DURING** the limited period of time at my disposal, I will speak to you about the present and general condition of Latin American trade and of its trends or possibilities, even though the topic involves diverse and complicated problems brought about by social-economic factors as well as the universal necessity of being a "good neighbor." To consider only inter-American trade at this time when the world is shrinking more and more in its economic relations, would be like admitting the possibility that a particular region in the world could establish an economy isolated from all the other nations of the world.

Before going any further, let us make clear what we mean by Latin America. This region is usually understood to comprise the countries south of the Rio Grande; twenty republics, each with its own government and each considered independent and autonomous in its political organization and in its economic policies. However, some of them—or, better still, next to them and among them—are certain non-autonomous islands in the Caribbean Sea, and the non-autonomous territories of Belize (British Honduras) and the Guianas. All belong to the same geographic region as their Latin American neighbors, with similar natural and social status, common economic problems, and commercial relations which are closely tied to the economy of the geographic region called Latin America. In many books and by many people this section of the world is named Hispanic America. But neither the former nor the latter name is accurate, for not all the people living in this region are



Latin or Hispanic, and it is impossible to find a suitable definition in reference to their origin or their race. At any rate, since that section of the American continent discovered and colonized by Spain is in common usage called Latin America, and because this entire region has similar economic conditions and common social problems, I shall try to analyze its commercial status and such trends as are in evidence today.

The analysis of these problems, however, should include those Caribbean countries which do not have self-government and which are, therefore, not considered part of the region designated as Latin America. Lack of statistical data compels me to limit largely my observations to the twenty independent countries that politically constitute Latin America. My observations are based on research done within the past few years by the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America.

In these countries, international trade has followed the general economic development of the world. While these New World areas were colonies or subject to Spain, all imports and exports were carried out with that nation, which was the sole intermediary for the exchange of merchandise with the other nations. Spain was then the economic center of a world in which its colonies formed the periphery. Later, as you well know, economic conditions changed, a shift in the commercial centers of the world occurred, and other powerful nations assumed trade leadership in both volume and value of consumers' goods.

But in all ages, in spite of trade barriers of lesser or greater strength, there is an interdependence of interests and commercial relations, of influences and mutual or reciprocal aims that determine international commerce. The economics of colonial times provided the key to the colonial state of commerce; the economic equilibrium, like liquids which in a series of connected containers will seek the same level, sought to follow the relationship between cost and price, and supply and demand.

However, it was not then, and is not today, a simple matter to maintain this state of equilibrium. Even when Spain controlled the greatest part of Latin America, economic interests antagonistic to her own interfered. And when the colonies achieved their independence, they gravitated to new centers, to those which in Europe were assuming economic predominance. The one which assumed

leadership in international trade with the former colonies was the United Kingdom, and this leadership lasted until approximately 1850. One hundred years later we find ourselves in a new situation, with new trends and possibilities we wish to understand, analyze, and explain, in an effort to serve the common interests of. . . . Here I pause and find that it is not easy to say in whose interest such investigations should be. Perhaps those of the present economic center, or those in the periphery? Perhaps those with self-government, or those that are not independent? Perhaps those that supply only raw materials, or those that change these raw materials into the finished product? Or, for the benefit of those that buy, or those that sell?

It is not easy, as you can well see, to define this interest, and to point it in one direction, when there are so many complex circumstances and factors that determine commercial interchange and its consequences.

As for myself, being Latin American, I believe that the uppermost interest should be for the good of all the people. In each country this interest should be analyzed in relation to its natural resources, and so adjusted as to achieve economic freedom for the greatest number possible, without those special privileges which tend to make peoples economically dependent, and which bind them in that status we now call "underdeveloped."

The common practice among all Latin American countries, as well as in non-autonomous areas in the Caribbean, is, and has been, to supply raw materials to manufacturing centers. These raw materials are then processed, and later sold back to the suppliers in the form of agricultural, forestry, mineral, and grazing products. The raw materials taken from the land require much labor, but are sold at a low price. However, the finished products are, in turn, offered at higher prices by those who manufacture. Very little labor is involved in much of this manufacturing, although large amounts of capital are invested.

Latin America is limited in its sales to more industrialized countries to those articles which natural resources and limited capital allow its various countries to produce. The number of raw materials, and in some places the number of articles, is one in a country. Before the last war, exports of primary products were as follows:

Cuba: sugar 70%, tobacco 10%  
 El Salvador: coffee 87%  
 Guatemala: coffee 65%,  
                   bananas 27%  
 Haiti: coffee 50%  
 Honduras: bananas 57%  
 Jamaica: bananas 60%,  
                   sugar 17%  
 Nicaragua: coffee 35%  
 Panama: bananas 74%  
 Puerto Rico: sugar 67%  
 Argentina: meats 23%,  
                   cereals 26%

Bolivia: tin 71%  
 Brazil: coffee 45%  
 British Guiana: sugar 58%  
 Chile: coffee 48%, nitrates 21%  
 Colombia: coffee 53%,  
                   petroleum 22%  
 Ecuador: cocoa 30%  
 French Guiana: lumber 48%  
 Paraguay: cotton 37%  
 Peru: petroleum 34%,  
                   cotton 18%, copper 17%  
 Uruguay: wool 44%, meats 21%  
 Venezuela: petroleum 92%

Other countries like Mexico, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and some of the islands in the Caribbean, have more diversified lists of exports, but such lists are made up also of raw materials, sometimes being foodstuffs, or articles destined for manufacturing in other countries.

Prices of primary products in certain markets changed in 1947 as compared with 1938 from a price index of 665 for cocoa down to 142 for rubber, which means that prices of these export articles have gone up. But this increase does not keep pace with the variation in the exchange during the postwar period as compared with that during prewar days. A study made in the United Nations concerning relative prices of exports and imports of underdeveloped countries, which include all the Latin American countries and other places in the Caribbean area, shows that exchange during the postwar and prewar periods is, in Central America (including Mexico), favorable in eight countries, not favorable in seven, and that there was no change in two. In South America, it is better in four, worse in five, with no change in two. This same study analyzes the quantum index prices of the different industrial articles imported, which shows that the variation is favorable in some cases to the countries exporting raw materials, but in many others unfavorable. For instance, the quantum index of textiles imported as compared with exports of raw materials is unfavorable in Brazil (81), Chile (58), British Guiana (50), French Guiana (73), Haiti (72), British Honduras (59), Mexico (87), Peru (61), Puerto Rico (55), and Venezuela (99). The quantum index with respect to foodstuffs and beverages has also gone down in the following

countries: Brazil (78), Colombia (80), Cuba (78), Chile (46), British Honduras (64), Mexico (71), and Peru (63). These indices show much variation among the different countries, without any well-defined trends, but with diverse variations which often are compensated for partially or totally. Moreover, the cases mentioned are important because textiles and foodstuffs are the main import articles for some Latin American countries.

In spite of this wide variety of conditions shown by the studies of the United Nations, one thing is very clear: Latin American countries, as far as commercial relations are concerned, depend principally on the more industrialized countries, and more particularly on the United States. This dependence has, during critical or war periods, caused economic depression, dislocations, and instability. For this reason, Latin American countries have redoubled their efforts in the last 25 years to lessen this dependence by exporting different articles, and by industrializing their own natural resources and processing their own raw materials. In some cases, lack of economic organization prevents their accomplishing some of these aims, while in others they are unable to help themselves because of outside factors which militate against their self-development.

Let us analyze now the present state of international commerce in Latin America. Total exports and imports for the years 1947, 1948, and 1949 amounted to (in millions of dollars) 5,899, 6,502, and 5,577, respectively, for exports, and 5,982, 5,884, and 5,313, respectively, for imports. If we compute the percentage of exports in each country as compared with the total in Latin America, in 1949, we find Brazil first with 19.68%; then follows Venezuela with 18.64%; Argentina, 17.58%; and Cuba with 10.93%. Thus, these countries accounted for 66.83% of the total exports in 1949. Concerning imports, Brazil accounts for 21% of the total; Argentina, 20.32%; Venezuela, 14.09%; and Cuba, 9.16%; the total of these four countries is 64.57%. The above shows that the volume of international Latin American commerce is traceable to a few countries, and we must bear in mind the fact that the four countries responsible for this large percentage export a small number of products. In Cuba, for example, exports are limited chiefly to raw sugar and tobacco, whereas in Venezuela petroleum is the only important export. The other countries are relatively unimportant

with reference to their volume of imports and exports. It should be pointed out further that the leading products are the same in some countries, but are produced under different circumstances that influence cost and price. Coffee, for instance, is exported by many countries of the Caribbean area and in large quantities by Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador. Bananas and cocoa are exported by many Caribbean countries. Among fibers, cotton is exported by Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Brazil, and Paraguay; sugar is exported by Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Tobago, British Guiana, and Peru, and lately, although on a small scale, by Mexico; beef, hides, and furs also are exported by several South American countries. It might be said, therefore, that there exists no specialization of exports which is determined by natural resources, commercial conditions, or economic organization. The only exceptions in this respect are Bolivia, which is the only country that exports tin; Chile, with its nitrate exports; and Venezuela, with petroleum.

The evolution of foreign trade in Latin America has demonstrated in the past few months, even more so than in the past years, the important role it plays in the economy of these nations. In some cases a decrease in commerce, and in others a threat of such a decrease, influences economic policies, which are directed towards the maintenance of the volume of exports. In 1948, the total value of exports from countries south of the Rio Grande reached such proportions (6,500 million dollars) that attention became fixed above all on the necessity of guarding against excessive importations. During that same year, only five countries exported less than the previous year, and among these Cuba underwent the greatest decline (49 million dollars). But, since exports reached a total of 720 million dollars, the country enjoyed a favorable trade balance.

During 1949 Latin American exports decreased to approximately 5,570 million dollars, which represented a shrinkage of some 900 million dollars as compared with 1948. There are eleven Latin American countries whose exports decreased in value, and in some cases this decrease was considerable. The value of Argentine exports went down by more than 600 million dollars; Cuba, 100 millions; Chile, nearly 30 millions; and Venezuela, about 70 millions. In spite of this, the balance of Latin American trade was

favorable in 1949, but this favorable balance, which exceeded 600 million dollars in 1948, was reduced to 250 million dollars in 1949, even though imports were reduced by 550 million down to 5,300 million dollars.

A study of Latin American exports shows that the only important products whose sale shrank considerably were metals, principally lead, copper, and tin, which are exported mostly by Chile and Bolivia. Argentina experienced the worst decline, which was due to a decrease in production of export products as well as to the loss of its European markets. "The main difference in the present conditions and those during 1947-48 is not so much the accumulation of exportable supplies as (1) the interruption of the rise in prices; (2) the strong proportionate decline of prices in some countries; (3) the lack of security of future exportations; (4) the general alarm caused by the economic recession that occurred at the beginning of 1949; (5) the observation that some exports have been maintained artificially because of Marshall Plan purchases or North American programs to sustain price levels or to stockpile; (6) and finally, because of the process of monetary expansion and the interruption of price increases in exportable products, costs crept up to the prices, while in previous years prices increased more than costs."\*

In Argentina, cereal production and, to a lesser degree, wool production suffered a large decline. In Chile, copper production suffered similarly. In fact, Argentine exports of wheat in 1949 declined by 340,000 tons, corn by 1,450,000 tons, and barley by 400,000 tons. In the same way that production of exportable products showed a decline in a few items, so an increase has taken place in some items, but none as great as the decreases. The important increase recorded is that of cotton in Mexico, where, as a result of irrigation projects completed, production rose from 570,000 bales in 1948 to over 900,000 in 1949. The rise of production of cotton in Brazil during 1949 above 1948 was not sufficient to match the 1940-44 figures, but in 1950 another rise is expected. The production of sugar, which declined in Cuba and which remains more or less stationary in the other exporter countries, in-

\* *Estudio Económico de América Latina 1949*. Comisión Económica para América Latina.

creased not only in the deficit-ridden countries of Latin America, but also in those which export small quantities, like Mexico.

Accumulation of inexportable stocks happened in a few cases of minor importance in total trade, but resulted in quite a strain on those countries affected. Ecuador's rice production and Nicaragua's sesame oil production are examples. On the other hand, Brazilian stocks of coffee, accumulated since the war, disappeared in 1949, and Argentina sold her excess stocks of cereals, principally to European countries and, to a small extent, to India, Japan, Paraguay, and Peru. In Mexico, where silver had become quite a problem, sales to the Near East and Far East reduced to normal the amount of stock on hand.

During the last few years, Latin American trade with the United States has increased, to the detriment of trade which previously existed with Europe. Data taken from *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, of the United States Commerce Department, reveal that United States imports from Latin America totaled 2,303.8 million dollars in 1949, an amount which, when compared with the 1936-38 average of only 524.4 millions, indicates a large increase that is accounted for by conditions well known to everyone.

As to the United States exports to Latin America, there has also taken place a large increase, to wit, from an average of 486.6 million dollars annually for 1936, 1937, and 1938 to 2,712.4 millions in 1949. Official statistics gathered by the International Monetary Fund reveal that European imports from Latin America declined from 2,596.11 million dollars in 1948 to 1,692.57 millions in 1949, while exports from Europe to Latin America totalled 1,313.04 million dollars in 1948, and 1,305.58 million dollars in 1949.

The principal products exported by Latin America to the United States are, at present, coffee, cane sugar, metals and some of their finished products, raw and semi-finished copper, lead, tin, crude petroleum and some of its derivatives, textile fibers and their manufactured products, raw wool, sisal hemp, cocoa, bananas, cottonseed and vegetable oils, nitrates, tobacco, furs and hides, and various vegetable products. The United States Department of Commerce estimates the value of these exports at 2,140 million dollars in 1947, 2,323.3 millions in 1948, and 2,295.9 millions in 1949—amounts that represent during these years about one-half of the total exports of Latin America. The mere reading of the above

list of articles, and consideration of the fact that many of them are produced by several countries for the sole purpose of export, show how difficult it would be to modify the foreign trade of Latin America, especially when it is noted that these regions do not have any diversification.

The principal products exported by the United States to Latin America during the years 1947, 1948, and 1949 were: industrial, electrical, agricultural, and other machinery; automobiles and accessories; iron and steel products; chemical and pharmaceutical supplies; wheat, rice, and other vegetable foodstuffs; finished textile products; meats, lard, milk, and other animal products; ships; petroleum and its derivatives; and other merchandise. The total dollar value of these exports to Latin America for the above years was 3,830.2 millions, 3,139.5 millions, and 2,694.1 millions, respectively. The largest percentage (39.7%) of the value of exports for the year 1949 was for machinery.

Owing to several well-known factors, among them the one already mentioned that many Latin American countries produce the same kinds of goods, trade among them always has been very limited. We persist in pointing out that, as none of these countries can foster large-scale industrial development aimed at industrializing these raw materials, it is only natural that trade among Latin American nations is limited. Furthermore—and this is a very significant circumstance—the majority of the countries own no fleet and must perforce ship in bottoms of other more developed nations.

The value of exports among Latin American countries was reduced in 1949 to an estimated 450 million dollars, as contrasted with the 1948 total of 600 millions. Although these are figures at current prices, they are about four times greater than those for the years 1938 and 1928. This increase in trade among Latin American nations is chiefly the result of fluctuation in prices. It has been calculated that, based on 1938 prices, the trade in 1949 is about 25 per cent less than in 1948, but about 30 per cent more than in 1938. At any rate, intra-regional commerce seems to have increased at a faster rate than commerce with outside countries, since the total value of exports computed at 1938 prices rose by 30 per cent in 1948 as compared with that of 1938, while exports among themselves went up by approximately 60 per cent. However, intra-regional exports declined in 1949 much more than total



exports when figured at current prices. If stabilized prices are used, then the relative decline between the former and the latter is a great deal less. These results might be attributed to the fact that the majority of goods traded between the Latin American nations were foodstuffs and raw materials, and these are products whose prices declined more than those of the manufactured products that make up the bulk of extra-regional trade.

In Latin America the importance of export markets differs in each of the countries. When this importance is measured in proportion to the exports absorbed, it appears to be greatest for Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru, and least for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, and Uruguay. On the other hand, the largest part of intra-regional commerce is carried by the southern part of South America—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and also Peru, which is to the north. This group of countries was responsible for 88 per cent of the total trade in 1928, 88 per cent in 1938, 80 per cent in 1948, and 86 per cent in 1949.

The analysis that we have just completed, though brief and incomplete, demonstrates that commercial intercourse in Latin America is subject to conditions and circumstances which are very difficult to modify in a short period of time. Many factors and obstacles impede the organization of its economy for the purpose of increasing production of goods from its natural resources, and of developing industries to use raw materials which heretofore have been sold to other industrialized nations. Nonetheless, the predominating trend is to break through these obstacles in order to improve the standard of living and to correct wherever possible the imbalance in special circumstances.

It cannot be said, therefore, that the trend of trade in Latin America is toward greater interchange among the Latin American nations. On the contrary, during the postwar period the barriers limiting trade with Europe have been pushed aside, and now Latin America is planning to recuperate lost markets in Europe as well as in other countries. In the last conference of the Economic Commission for Latin America, which took place in Montevideo in June this year, a resolution was adopted which provided for a study of conditions of commercial trade in Europe, with the evident purpose of increasing and diversifying markets for Latin American raw materials and the purchase of industrial products

needed. This desire and purpose are evidently convenient as long as the commercial conditions are as I have presented them to you. It is clear that the economic development of Latin America under present world conditions tends and should tend toward making each country more independent in the sense that each should satisfy its own needs with its own natural resources. To accomplish this it will be necessary to change substantially the products in foreign trade, even though the organization of a rational economy should call for each country to produce those things for which it is best fitted. As long as production is carried out with the present aims in view, it is difficult to visualize the possibility of thus organizing the economy. Many and profound changes will have to come about before Latin America will steer its production in accordance with the natural and economic possibilities of each country. Regardless of the changes that may come, one must take into consideration the insurmountable difficulties of restricting trade to fit the necessities or conveniences of the American continent.

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William R. Mizelle: THE UNITED STATES LOOKS  
AT INTER-AMERICAN TRADE

WHEN the average United States trader looks at Latin America, he sees only the dim gray shadow of vast continental and island masses projected vaguely against a sheet of ruled graph paper. Much more clearly he sees the bold black lines across the face of the chart. Most of us here in turning our minds to the south see colors and hear music that escape the man of trade as he studies the fluctuating lines traced by import and export tonnages, and by profit and loss. But this year, the businessman has his own compensation, for his shadow-shape of Latin America is bisected by a sharply rising line across the graph. It represents a record three billion dollars' worth of goods that have flowed into the United States from other New World nations during the year, easing dollar shortages that limited their imports from us, and giving the rest of the Hemisphere a favorable balance in its commercial exchange with this country.

Framed by such a lovely rising line, Latin America looks good to the United States trader this year. It looks like a better buying and selling customer than it has for a long, long time.

Stockpile buying triggered by the Korean war and a boom in coffee prices are among the chief causes of the present brisk and healthy circulation of trade. But even longer-lasting benefits have resulted from a basic, revolutionary change in North America's commercial attitude toward its neighbors to the south. We have come around to the view that it pays to help Latin America prosper.

This realization has been on its way for a number of years, but events of 1950 have spotlighted it sharply and unmistakably. We have learned that it is not enough to secure and hold markets in Latin America. We recognize now that unless the southern republics' producing industries are vigorous going concerns, they cannot buy and sell enough to keep our own economy from suffering. With Latin America accounting for more than one-third of our external trade, United States government and private commercial circles are now helping Latin American nations bolster their economies and industries, their agricultural production and living standards, not only as a neighborly gesture, but to protect ourselves.

Serious problems remain to be solved, but inter-American commercial relations today are a far and happy cry from what they were a half-century ago when the Spanish empire had freshly lost its last foothold in the Caribbean. At that time, we chose to follow the example of other world powers who were building empires to foster their trade. This was the prevalent business morality of the time. While our own policy was comparatively moderate for that period in history, powerful interests in the United States considered the rest of the Americas a private preserve of fair game for economic poaching. Despite the dissenting murmurs of a far-sighted few even that long ago, men who were shaping United States policy regarded the regions to the south as new free land, rich in natural resources for the taking. The Caribbean they saw as a semicolonial lake into which United States agricultural and manufactured commodities could be poured at asking prices. A few old-timers in the United States armed forces today still wear colorful campaign ribbons issued for landings at Nicaragua and Veracruz, and for other Caribbean sorties all stemming more or less from the notion that success in international commerce could be achieved by sending a cruiser.

Yet in average years between 1900 and 1915, when "dollar diplomacy" was going full blast, United States producers sold little more than 300 million dollars' worth of goods annually to Latin America—barely more than one-tenth of our sales to other Hemisphere nations this year.

As was the case in the first World War, Latin America's exports to the United States boomed during World War II. Its agricultural and mineral products, and even its manufactured goods

poured into this country, piling up hard currency credits as the machinery, steel, and finished products that we normally ship to the Hemisphere in return became unavailable because of the war. During this time when the New World's European markets and suppliers were virtually cut off by the war, Latin America and the United States became more dependent upon one another commercially than ever before.

When the war ended, Latin America hoped for a resumption of the "triangle trade" whereby the southern republics, particularly the Río de la Plata regions, had used the proceeds of agricultural and livestock sales to Europe to buy the bulk of their imports from the United States. Before the depression, Latin America had exchanged the pounds or francs earned by her sales to Europe into dollars to buy goods from the United States. But Britain, France, and other western European nations that had once been heavy buyers of Latin American meats, grain, vegetable oils, and other products were so depleted by the conflict that free convertibility of the world's currencies remained out of the question.

When United States manufactured goods again became available after V-J Day, the American republics went on a buying spree with their amassed dollar funds. By late 1947, Latin America's wartime dollar balances had evaporated as the southern countries bought far more from us than they could recoup by export sales.

The acute dollar shortage which resulted dominated trade relations between the United States and other Hemisphere nations for two years. Northern traders chafed as various Latin American countries fell behind on their payments of commercial debts, imposed rigid limitations on import and exchange permits, restricted the amounts of dollar earnings that United States firms in Spanish America and Brazil could send back to this country, and contracted barter-type trade agreements with soft currency areas. All these measures to husband dwindling dollar resources in Latin America naturally cut into United States sales in that area.

This experience was an unhappy one for both North and South America, but it pointed up the valuable lesson that it pays to help our neighbors. Like a snowball rolled back and forth between two adjoining houses, international commerce grows with each two-way trip. The more we buy from Latin America, the more dollars the Americas have with which to buy goods from the United

States. And the more United States construction materials and producer commodities our southern neighbors receive, the more they can build up their industries and natural resources. With the additional boost of dollar loans and technical aid, New World nations turn out more valuable supplies for the United States market and earn more dollars to fund their credits. And so the snowball rolls.

United States government and private trade circles have proved around the conference table their recognition of the need to keep the inter-American snowball rolling. The Joint Argentine-United States Commission for Trade Studies, for instance, spent months in exhaustive 1949 sessions in a sincere effort to achieve closer cooperation for mutual profit, while similar meetings have occurred lately in the Caribbean and other areas. Dollar-gap studies were ordered by President Truman early in 1950 to speed action on such measures as the International Trade Organization Charter, and to generate more imports to balance the seesaw of Hemisphere commerce.

Meanwhile Spanish America and Brazil on their own were making drastic efforts to sell more to the United States and buy less. By December of 1949, the trade balance with the United States shifted in Latin America's favor, and the dollar gap closed before the middle of the year, with a new volume of trade both ways about five times higher than the prewar level. In July, 1950, twelve Latin American nations were in the black in their export-import exchange with the United States, while sixteen achieved that happy position in August.

Perhaps the heaviest dollars-and-cents contribution to Latin America's financial recovery was the delayed-action effect caused by the exhaustion of Brazil's mountainous coffee surplus. This huge excess, left over from depression days, was finally used up in mid-1949, and late in that year dollar coffee prices started soaring after their long lag below the general world food price level. Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and eight other coffee countries benefited by the new high prices. At the same time, a boom in rubber and a bumper year for cotton and other remunerative export crops stepped up the trade income of many Latin American countries. Farther south, the Río de la Plata countries had won themselves a healthy overseas market for wool, hides, and

other products by matching prevailing world prices. Hemisphere countries also devalued their currencies and simplified multiple exchange rates, giving North American buyers and sellers more for their money and products. This too paid off in larger dollar incomes. With her hard-earned dollars, Latin America promptly placed large orders in the United States to make up for her reduction of imports during the lean days of her exchange shortage.

In June the inter-American trade picture was once again jolted into a new pattern as North Korean tanks ground across the thirty-eighth parallel and the United States set about stopping them with United Nations backing. Would United States industry again switch to all-out defense production, leaving Latin America starved for steel, machinery, construction materials, and all the myriad imports diverted by war? The New World nations, so recently squeezing their dollar spending down to a minimum, now rushed into the United States market to stockpile against such an emergency. Mexico dropped her ruling that all imported cars must be assembled in local plants, and ready-made United States cars began rolling across the border for the retail market. Brazil eased her restrictions on the importation of automotive parts and supplies, and limitations on other United States commodities were relaxed throughout the Hemisphere. As United States sales spurted overseas, there were also signs that this country would step up her own stockpile purchases of Latin American copper, nitrates, manganese, quartz, and other materials vital to defense.

This time the kaleidoscope of inter-American trade had gotten such a shaking-up that it took United States traders a while to get used to the new pattern. In previous years, North American exporters had complained that Latin America could not pay for enough United States goods to maintain a profitable flow of trade. The big question now is whether Washington will clamp down controls on exports to the south, and whether United States producers can turn out enough goods to fill Latin America's splurge of orders.

The answer from the nation's capital is reassuring. While export licenses issued by the Department of Commerce have fallen behind the pile of Latin American requests in recent months, United States government planners recognize that they must maintain overseas trade.

Nor does the resumption of license control on iron and steel products necessarily foreshadow new United States restrictions on exports generally. A better indication of the policy-makers' feeling is the fact that they are backing a new drive to break down artificial trade barriers and to encourage multilateral commerce and wider convertibility of currencies.

Under the present system, the Department of Commerce is responsible for assuring that all countries friendly to the United States receive their fair share of exports. An Inter-Agency Committee acts for the Commerce Department in regulating the issue of export licenses, matching total United States exportable supplies of scarce materials against the department's own guide list of customer nations.

"In imposing controls," said Secretary of Commerce Sawyer in November, 1950, "we shall try to remember that export markets are hard to develop—once discontinued, they are even harder to recapture."

But the motivation behind Washington's firm new export-import policy is not simply a commercial one. It also represents a realization that the Hemisphere's defense against aggression requires a growing emphasis on exports in exchange for strategic imports. It is felt in the national capital that cutting down on exports would hamper Latin America's economic development programs, and thus weaken the New World's economies at a crucial time. Hog-tying industrial expansion to the south would also mean that Latin America would not be as able, or as willing, to supply the United States with strategic raw materials. This attitude in Washington favors the freest possible trade consistent with military needs and domestic requirements, with a minimum of controls. As and when controls are necessary, government policy will be to distribute supplies proportionally among exporters, among friendly countries, and between domestic and overseas markets.

Export priorities, it is believed, may be instituted early next year to assure shipments essential to the Economic Cooperation Administration program and other overseas aid, but Latin America's basic economic needs are not likely to be overlooked. The quantities of United States goods, such as steel, which various countries may receive also may become subject to allocation within the next few months, again with an eye to the New World's requirements.



Another aspect of inter-American trade in time of war is receiving careful consideration in Washington at present. During World War II, many Latin American nations, particularly Brazil, suffered from United States control of prices for raw materials imported by this country, and from the blocking of large dollar payments in the United States until hostilities were over. World prices rose during the years that these dollars could not be spent, and when Latin America finally obtained free use of its deep-freeze dollar funds, their buying power had dropped as much as 50 per cent. United States authorities will probably take steps to assure that this unfortunate situation does not arise again.

On the whole, United States industry will be left a free hand in apportioning exports to overseas customers. And while planners in Washington have been setting policy to assure Latin America its fair share, the industries themselves have not been ignoring the question. *Business Week* magazine recently conducted a check-up among some of the nation's major exporting industries which revealed that few United States concerns are thinking of cutting back their overseas shipments. With a few exceptions, the big exporters plan to give customers abroad the same treatment as United States buyers, subject to government license restrictions.

If it becomes necessary for private industry to divide its output systematically among its customers, overseas consumers will continue to receive as large a percentage as ever of the total. If a manufacturer has to put his domestic customers on allocations using a given percentage of previous consumption as a basis, he will probably allocate deliveries to his overseas customers by a similar system. The apportionment will depend to a large extent on foreign competition. For example, if a certain exporter is competing closely in Latin America with European suppliers, that exporter will be likely to go as far as possible in meeting his Hemisphere orders without delay.

Replies to the McGraw-Hill publications' questionnaire which went to representative firms in most of the nation's export industries, provide a spot check on the outlook for exports in individual fields. The darkest prospect is that in the machine-tool industry. For years, the United States concerns that build machinery to make other machines have been unable to satisfy overseas demand. They now have a backlog of orders ten times larger than their maximum

rate of delivery. About 15 per cent of this unfilled backlog of requests is made up of overseas orders, nearly all from civilian consumers. So Latin American customers, especially private buyers, will still have to wait for their machine tools

In electrical products, Latin America will not get all it wants, but will hold its own. One electrical manufacturer reports that he has been forced to allocate export orders since August, and says he could have sold five times his actual volume of goods if he had an unlimited supply on hand. Another manufacturer has been allocating about 6 per cent of plant output to exports for some time, and expects to continue at that figure.

New World buyers will probably get all the United States automobiles they can afford, because it has been the Latin Americans themselves that have limited auto shipments south. The United States industry is anxious to expand its markets abroad. If an output cut becomes necessary, the industry will set export allocations at about 10 per cent of total manufacture.

In farm machinery, the customer abroad will again have to share the defense production pinch with the United States consumer. Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company will continue to export 10 to 12 per cent of its total production of farm machinery, sorely needed by our neighbors to the south. Caterpillar Tractor Company reports that, if voluntary restrictions become necessary, it intends to take care of its long-standing overseas customers before filling new orders from abroad.

In the chemicals field, one of the biggest United States exporters plans to allocate its products with the idea of supplying first the customers it can count on in the future. "The export business is a permanent, important section of our total business," this manufacturer says. "We intend to protect our foreign customers as far as we possibly can."

Textile buyers in Latin America may rest assured that they will not go begging. Representative of United States textile production, J. P. Stevens & Company points out that overseas markets are particularly valuable to textile manufacturers when business slumps at home. For this reason the textile industry, which is subject to erratic fluctuations, will continue to give its buyers abroad top consideration.

United States traders do not expect a new dollar shortage to reduce the Latin American demand for our goods, despite the fact that the American republics are pouring their dollar reserves into this country. More dollars than goods are still going abroad, and will probably continue to do so.

This country's total imports of strategic materials and other products are likely to top ten billion dollars for the coming year, with a large percentage coming from Latin America. Loans and foreign aid programs will add another six billion to build up the dollar resources of friendly nations.

Adding further to the New World's funds for the United States market, especially in Mexico and the Caribbean area, tourist dollars are pouring south in payment for Latin America's "invisible export." A number of Hemisphere nations no longer require visas for tourist travel, while others are bearing down hard on the construction of new luxurious hotels and pleasure resorts in a bid for more North American visitors.

Another source of fresh dollar reserves is the flight of United States capital to booming Latin American countries. Mexico and Uruguay in particular have profited as the most attractive dollar havens in the Hemisphere at present. Fear of new United States tax increases drove over 120 million dollars in refugee capital into Mexico during September and October, 1950, following lesser amounts since the outbreak of the Korean war. United States individuals and concerns with funds on their hands know that their money will buy more in Mexico today, with the peso now valued at a level probably lower than its actual dollar worth. Uruguay's attraction for the United States investor stems largely from her new Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Industrial Development with the United States.

A liberalized International Bank policy on loans is bolstering overseas dollar reserves further, and reflects the new United States realization that it pays to help Latin America help itself. In October the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development announced a precedent-setting credit of 10 million dollars to finance small enterprises in Mexico—the first loan of this type it had extended to any Hemisphere nation. The previous month, the Export-Import Bank had announced a 150 million dollar loan

to Mexico for transportation, agricultural and irrigation projects, communications and electrical facilities.

A further demonstration of the new loan policy might be seen in the 125 million dollar Export-Import Bank credit to United States banks to cover Argentina's commercial debts to United States concerns. Early this fall also, the World Bank established a credit of 33 million dollars for Uruguay's use in developing her electric power and telephone facilities. In Brazil, the Export-Import Bank has recently extended 25 million dollars for increasing the capacity of the Volta Redonda national steel plant, along with further loans for the Bahia Cement Company and other developments. Earlier, the World Bank put up 15 million dollars for generating equipment for Brazil's Paulo Afonso hydroelectric project, following its 75 million dollar loan to the Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company.

United States technical assistance, in addition to the continued doses of dollars and goods, is another vitamin that this country is administering to build up Latin America's commercial health. The meager 12 million dollars that the United States has set aside for Point-Four cooperative technical assistance in Latin America, plus the similar 20 million dollar United Nations appropriation, can do more to promote industrial development, and therefore trade, than could any number of monetary loans. The September, 1950, appropriation will provide for United States technical skill and experience to be applied in New World nations wherever they are needed most. There is little new about the Point-Four idea except the amount of publicity it has received. It is essentially a plan to combine the facilities of separate agencies that have been supplying technical aid to the American republics with little fanfare for a number of years.

But the new program coordinates the activities of such veteran agencies as the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, the United States Census Bureau, the Bureau of Public Roads, and the Civil Aeronautics Administration. With private capital backing, the "know-how" of these organizations can now be directed with new force against the barriers to economic development in tropical and subtropical America.

The new United States approach to inter-American commercial relations, which puts long-term mutual security ahead of today's

dollar profit, gives any analysis of Hemisphere trade at this time a pretty optimistic tone. But to become effective, even the wisest policy must be translated into action by individuals. In the process, even the best of intentions may bog down in misconceptions and lack of understanding. Most of the influences affecting inter-American commerce indicate that the trader in this country, watching the shadow pattern of Latin America on his ruled-paper graph, will continue to see his import and export figures reach new peaks for a while at least. But if he hopes to keep his customer's good will, on which his profits are based, he had better look behind the paper curtain. When difficulties arise, the United States exporter is inclined to blame the Latin American. He does so because he does not understand Latin America's problems, some of which the North American himself might have solved.

On the other hand, in the many ups and downs of trade today, the southern businessman is still overly inclined to echo anti-American propaganda blaming his commercial troubles on "dollar imperialism" and "Yankee economic aggression." In this, of course, he is ignoring the United States trader's side of the story.

What inter-American commerce most needs today is more and more people, North American and Latin American alike, who can understand both sides in the crises. To achieve a clearer mutual comprehension of the American republics' economic, political, and social problems, we have one invaluable resource: our American educational institutions. While the government, cultural foundations, and even private enterprise are cooperating in the exchange of students, teachers, and technicians with Latin America, commerce itself would benefit by playing a larger part.

The University of Florida's Institute of Inter-American Affairs and Graduate School of Inter-American Studies are helping the people of the United States and Latin America to know one another better. Undergraduate area students, a publication program, and the conference which we are now attending all help equip North Americans and Latin Americans with a useful insight into the interdependence of our New World nations. The man of trade would do well to encourage this and other similar programs, for we can ill afford the handicap of foggy understanding in inter-American relations at the present time when our American way of doing business is on trial before the world.



*Part III*

*AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS OF THE  
CARIBBEAN AREA*





## Wilson Popenoe: PROBLEMS OF FOOD AND OTHER CROP PRODUCTS IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA

**WE ARE** met together here in Gainesville to discuss the problems of a great region. To me it is a source of satisfaction to see agricultural problems put near the head of the list. For indeed—and I dare add, fortunately—agriculture remains in most of the Caribbean countries the basis of our welfare and our best hope for the future.

We are trying today to take stock of the situation at mid-century. I assume that the principal purpose of this stocktaking is the crystallization of our views regarding the most useful steps to be taken in the years immediately ahead. How can we make more efficient use of our agricultural resources? What are some of the major problems we are facing? What are the prospects for the near future?

Before we can intelligently look forward we must look back and see what we have accomplished in the past half-century. Where have we made our greatest gains and where have we failed to make satisfactory gains? I shall attempt briefly to review the field, basing my observations principally on my own experiences, which extend over most of the Caribbean region and go back more than thirty-five years. I am attempting to cover a broad field, and I realize that in this audience there are many experts who are profoundly versed in many specialized phases of agriculture. They may not agree with some of my statements. They will probably be right and I wrong. But if we can get a general picture of the

situation as it exists today and formulate a few ideas regarding future progress, something will have been achieved.

Perhaps we should mention at the start that we are discussing two somewhat distinct though closely related problems—subsistence agriculture which controls the standard of living of many thousands of people; and the production of export crops which provides gainful employment for other thousands and on which depends in large part the economic welfare of a country.

### *I. Looking Back*

At the turn of the century agriculture was still primitive in many of the smaller nations. It was more advanced in some of the European colonial possessions where it had for a long time been based mainly on a sugar economy. Agricultural research as we know it today was practically non-existent. With no exceptions which I can recall, experiment stations were small botanic gardens which did great work in plant introduction but which up to that time had not gone much further.

In the early years of this century experiment stations were founded in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Mexico undertook similar work which was interrupted for a time in the second decade.

As rapidly as the results of experimentation in these and other regions became available the work of extension took form, and along with this came a great increase of interest in agricultural education. One of the first really good agricultural colleges of our region was the one established at Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Later arose the excellent Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. About 1920 Bernardo Iglesias developed a well-staffed though small college of agriculture at San José, Costa Rica. Other schools have appeared here and there. Some of them have flourished; others have languished for lack of funds, because of political interference, or for other reasons.

Turning now to progress realized in the major agricultural industries, perhaps the most interesting feature is the struggle we have had to protect some of the major crops from their natural enemies. There was a time when sugar cane was threatened by mosaic disease. Many of us remember the heroic and successful

efforts of F. S. Earle and his associates to save the sugar industry in Puerto Rico and Cuba.

Cacao has lost some ground owing mainly to the spread of two fungus diseases. The coffee industry has been expanded tremendously in some areas. It has lost ground in a few others. Fortunately, coffee has not been threatened by insects or disease to the same extent as sugar cane and cacao. There are signs, however, that our days of bliss may be numbered.

The immense banana industry of the Caribbean has been threatened twice: once by Panama disease, and more recently by Sigatoka. Not only has it survived both of these but it has in certain ways benefited from them. The expense of fighting these diseases has made necessary more intelligent and intensive cultural practices. Indeed there is probably no example of horticultural advance so striking as that of the banana industry, if we are thinking of cultural practices and their improvement in the past half-century.

There has been a considerable expansion of the acreage devoted to hard fibers (Agaves and related plants), primarily with a view to producing bags for shipment of coffee and other products. We have also seen in the past twenty years the establishment of the abacá or manila hemp industry in this Hemisphere.

One of the weakest spots, perhaps, is in the field of vegetable oils. We are still short of edible fats, not to mention possibilities of these materials for the export trade. The African oil palm has commenced to appear in Central America, and in several places there has been increased production of peanuts, sesame, and a few other oil crops.

These are a few of the highlights. We are justified in saying that much progress has been made with regard to the major commercial crops. But in many regions subsistence farming has not advanced at the same pace. Obviously, it takes a tremendous amount of work to improve the planting material and cultural practices used by thousands of small farmers scattered over the mountainsides and valleys of a huge region, but this, it seems to me, is the major task which we should set ourselves at this time.

*II. Looking Forward*

When I was a youngster, they used to tell me in church that not only had I done those things I should not have done but that I had left undone those things which I should have done. This, it always seemed to me, was a pretty sound and comprehensive statement. Perhaps we can take it as a starting point for considering our responsibilities for the future of the Caribbean region.

And I think it is only fair at this juncture to state frankly that I have come to Gainesville at this moment because I know that Florida can and should help in the development of the Caribbean region. President Miller has made this very clear.

Why should Florida be interested in the Caribbean region? Why should Montana be interested in the United States of America? When I was here last June, I had the honor of attending a very stimulating meeting at which were present those members of the University staff who are interested in the American tropics. At that meeting I came forward with the thesis—not original by any means—that the southern part of Florida belongs to the Caribbean. At the imminent risk of losing my citizenship in California I elaborated this thesis.

Conditions of soil and climate, of crop plants and their natural enemies, place southern Florida definitely in the Caribbean zone. Because you have this splendid University staffed with experts in many branches who are familiar with the problems which face us around the Caribbean, it is your duty, and I may add your privilege, to cooperate with us in the solution of our agricultural problems—a duty and a privilege which your president and your faculty have accepted in that high sense of inter-American cooperation which has almost become a part of our religion.

I have mentioned the subsistence farmer—they call him Liborio in Cuba; they call him Juan Bimba in Venezuela. On the one side, the big farmer is able to look out for himself. He can hire technical help and he can buy tractors and spray pumps. Liborio and Juan Bimba cannot do that. What do those boys need?

Many people think they need more beefsteak and fish and butter and eggs and milk. Even at the Hot Springs Conference some years ago this seemed to be the general feeling. Imagine our relief down in Central America when Professor Robert S. Harris of

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—an outstanding authority on human nutrition—visited many small homes on the mountainsides of inland Honduras and then sat back with the remark, "There's nothing wrong with the diet here—what there is of it." In other words, Professor Harris believes that the foodstuffs commonly available and consumed around the Caribbean provide a well-balanced diet providing the consumer can get enough of them. We should also add, I think, that a great deal depends upon what other things the consumer gets inside of him. Not infrequently—in fact in the great majority of cases—the consumer has one or more parasites holding him down—perhaps the organism which causes malaria, the common hookworm, the equally common amoeba, and the like. It seems to many of us, therefore, that the problem is twofold. First, we must help people get rid of the parasites, and second, we must help them get more food—not better food, just more food. I am reminded of my friend who visited my home in Guatemala and left the wine cellar empty. Tied to a bottle was a note, "Dear Doc, get more wine, not better wine, just more wine."

The sociologists talk a good deal about human relationships. To some of us farmers the matter often seems a bit involved. We have acquired the feeling that this human relationship commonly boils down to the relationship between the human being and what he gets to eat or what he does not get to eat, remembering always that those omnipresent parasites may take most of it away from him.

You will think that I am stepping out pretty grandly into the field of human nutrition, so I had better retract a few of my steps. I am nothing but a common or garden horticulturist with long years of experience in tropical America and a profound devotion to the welfare of the peoples who live in that part of the world.

I wish now to discuss some of the major problems which confront us when we sit down to think or talk about the agricultural future of the Caribbean region. I am sure no one will attempt to contradict me when I say that the first thing we should do is to hang on to what nature has given us. In other words, we must conserve our natural resources. Two years ago, along with many other delegates from Latin America, I spent a fortnight at Denver, Colorado, receiving a thorough course of indoctrination.

We listened to that grand old apostle of conservation, Hugh Bennett. We listened to the equally apostolic though younger William Vogt, and we listened to many others. I have never attended a conference which left me so impressed and convinced. Granted that too much emphasis may have been placed on a few points, my reply has always been the following: When I was a youngster I listened to Billy Sunday, a great evangelist. He did not paint Hell in very attractive colors. Perhaps they were even too lurid. But he made us sit up and take notice, and that was his real objective.

Where do we stand in Latin America as regards conservation and soil management? In general pretty badly, of course. Worse in some areas, not badly in others. I cannot explain it all. I cannot explain how the Guatemalan highlands can still produce fair crops after two thousand years or more of cultivation without what we would call modern principles of soil management. I can only surmise that those Indians know more than we think they know. They never saw a bag of nitrate of soda and they never heard of Wilson and Toomer. Something may lie in the fact that every once in awhile the volcanoes have dumped a lot of new land on them, which reminds me of a remark made by a friend a few years ago as I was driving him down the west coast of Guatemala. I pointed to a smoking volcano, a cone which appeared only thirty or forty years ago. I told him the story, and I ended by saying, "This, you see, is a new country." He glanced at the dense cloud of smoke pouring out of Santiaguito. "Yes," he commented, "maybe it is not finished yet."

Another thing which has saved many parts of tropical America from greater destruction is the inefficient, much-maligned wooden plow. Thank goodness it has done a terrible job so far as plowing is concerned. If Mr. Oliver or the McCormick-Deerings had gotten here two centuries ago with their efficient steel moldboard plows, we would have been ruined irreparably. Thank goodness we now realize that we must keep those efficient plows off our mountain-sides and, in fact, we are not even convinced we should use them at all on most of our soils.

One of our major problems is the conservation of our forest resources and our ground cover. This is really serious. I think perhaps it is the first thing to which we should give attention.

Next, we should know more about our soils. We need soil surveys everywhere—the kind made by Hugh Bennett and your own Bob Allison in Cuba many years ago. Some people may think soil surveys are something for the soil scientists only. But when I was in Cuba in 1941 I found that every important sugar-cane man with whom I talked referred to his lands in terms of Bennett and Allison's classification. That job will go down in history, and eventually we shall have many more like it.

Our second big problem, as I see it (and again I shall not be surprised if someone contradicts me), lies in the field of drainage and irrigation. The great undeveloped areas around the Caribbean are mainly those of the coastal region. Sanitation and drainage are the two big problems. In certain areas they have been solved to a limited extent—perhaps to a very satisfactory extent—but there are lots of areas left. When the Spaniards came, they stayed out of these areas because they did not know how to combat tropical diseases and they had no equipment to carry out huge drainage programs. So they went to the highlands or to the dry Pacific littoral where they suffered less from disease and where they did some irrigation on a small scale. But the ground has scarcely been scratched. For example, every year enough water to irrigate five thousand acres flows through our little valley in Honduras and dumps itself into the ocean. The residents of our valley can farm during only half of the year because we have six months without rainfall. Opportunities like this make one realize that Honduras has a future.

I have been talking about big problems—conservation and drainage and irrigation. I would like now to mention something much simpler, more easily within our grasp. I refer to crop improvement and crop diversification through the introduction of new plant materials. You will pardon me if I wax enthusiastic on this subject; it is the one to which I have devoted the best years of my life. I have done so because I like things which are easy, and can you tell me anything easier than to double your production—of corn, let us say—by getting improved seed from somebody who will give it to you free?

All my life I have seen such things happen. I have seen government agencies as well as private individuals pass out cuttings of a new variety of sugar cane or seeds of a new legume or grafted

fruit trees and innumerable other things which meant increased production for the farmer without an hour more of work or an additional cent invested. You simply cannot beat a proposition like that.

Because it is so quick, so inexpensive, and the results are so obvious, the introduction of new plant materials has always impressed me as the direct route to agricultural improvement among small farmers in tropical America. If you start out by telling the farmer that he has to buy a spray pump or have someone make an expensive soil survey of his farm, or that he has to send to Chile for two hundred bags of nitrate of soda, you may meet what I believe you call, here in the states, consumer resistance. But if you hand the same fellow ten sugar-cane cuttings and tell him to plant them, and then observe that "next year you are going to tell me whether or not you got more cane than you have had from your old variety," you are off to a good start.

I hardly know where to begin when it comes to discussing one of the major problems of tropical agriculture—that of pest control. The larger agricultural interests are able to handle it. The larger private farmers can do so in most cases. When it comes to Liborio and Juan Bimba, they must as a rule get help from somebody. Obviously, their respective governments are the ones to step in and do this, and in many instances governments have made laudable and successful efforts along this line. But when the migratory locusts land in his corn patch or the army worms show up in his bean field, Liborio is pretty well sunk. There is hope, however, for every year the small farmer is getting more help from governmental agencies.

### *III. Opportunities in Education*

I have mentioned briefly some of our major problems in the field of agriculture. We are gathered together in a great educational center. It seems fitting, therefore, that we should discuss educational problems of the Caribbean in the realm of agriculture as well as those which belong in other fields of human endeavor. And before going further, I wish to pay tribute to the splendid contribution which this university has already made to the Caribbean region in the field of education in general.



I have mentioned a few of the institutions scattered throughout the American tropics which have trained and are training technical agriculturists and farmers. I would like to set forth our needs in the field of agricultural education, as I see them, and perhaps I do not see them so clearly as some of you who are better trained in the educational field. Perhaps I would do better to put the matter in the form of several questions which you can answer better than I.

Do we want in tropical America professional schools which can turn out soil chemists, plant pathologists, and the like? Would we not do better to limit ourselves to the development of more schools of a practical vocational nature where we can train sound agriculturists rather than professional men?

I still recall my own experience as a lad in California. I wanted to be a horticulturist. I wanted to sit at the feet of the very best man in the field of horticulture. That man was L. H. Bailey, who was then at Cornell. I never realized my ambition, but in talking with young men throughout tropical America who were heading for some specialized branch of agriculture, I have found almost invariably that they were thinking along those same lines—they wanted to study under the very best man in their chosen field.

It is obvious that no one school in tropical America or elsewhere can bring together the great authorities in the many branches of agriculture. These great men are widely scattered in the leading educational institutions. We must go to them. They will not come to us.

There is another angle to the matter, another argument against trying to prepare highly specialized professional men in tropical America. It is this: We would need to bring together highly paid teachers who would only be required to train a few men. We need soil chemists and plant pathologists in the tropics, but we do not need many of them in any one country. In contrast to our needs in these highly specialized professional fields, we should have thousands upon thousands of well-trained, practical agriculturists. This, it seems to me, is where we should place most emphasis when planning our tropical programs of education. I have been encouraged to feel that I am right about this because our little school in Honduras, Escuela Agrícola Panamericana, has attracted so

much attention during these past few years. Ours is a purely vocational school.

What I am really trying to lead up to is this: Florida has a great college of agriculture. We could not hope to duplicate it in any of the Caribbean countries. We do not need to duplicate it. Years ago you opened your doors to our young men, and now you are planning to make still more effective your generous cooperation in agriculture. When I stand back and attempt to evaluate the benefits which will accrue to tropical America as a result of the expanding program you are putting on foot, I wax enthusiastic and I make no apologies for so doing.

Manuel Elgueta: FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH IN  
CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE AND THE ROLE OF  
THE UNITED STATES IN ITS DEVELOPMENT

**RESEARCH** is fundamental for agricultural progress; tropical conditions, which make agriculture different and unique in the Caribbean countries, emphasize even more its importance. But solutions cannot be the same as those of temperate regions: plants are different and problems are different.

We must recognize that the Caribbean is an agricultural area par excellence. Agriculture is the main economic basis for most of this territory, and constitutes its means of subsistence. For example, crop plants such as coffee, cacao, bananas, and many others, thrive well only in tropical regions. Some of these have a good export value. For some of these countries, even without industries, the problem of foreign exchange is less acute than for many in temperate areas.

Crops are always menaced by new diseases introduced from abroad. Pathogenes can even adapt themselves and become virulent where, up to now, they have coexisted with their hosts without any visible damage. Banana cultivation, for example, has been handled under favorable conditions of adequate capital and management, and gives the impression that it has few problems. Nevertheless, the Panama disease, caused by a soil *Fusarium*, forces the companies that have had land under cultivation for several years to return it to wilderness.

Research, therefore, is needed to solve the problems of native tropical crops, to improve production, and to attain a higher standard of living for the peoples of these lands.

An incredible waste of effort and money in the cultivation of most crops prevails today. The eagerness to provide for better care of plants results in an overemphasis on methods of cultivation, which in the more fortunate cases are unnecessary but which sometimes can even produce a harmful effect. Hand labor is underpaid, yet actual conditions do not permit payment of salaries conducive to a higher standard of living.

Research is still in an initial stage in this region. In the cases where there has been some, its impact has not yet affected the general production. For instance, vegetative cacao propagation in Trinidad can easily quadruplicate the low yields of existing plantations. Yet, even when an effort has been made to produce enough clonal plant material to distribute to the farmers, the repopulation with this material has been very slow, and the facilities for its production much exceed the actual demand.

The role of the United States in the development of research is of such importance that we may say with no exaggeration that, without its example, direction, and orientation, programs of significance for the progress of these countries could not be realized. Besides, the United States has great responsibility with respect to the progress of this region. This responsibility stems from the leadership that it has assumed within the nations of the world, as well as from today's tragic situation. But we must add that it also stems from a sincere desire to promote the economic advancement of her sister countries of the Americas, and to extend to them the benefits of modern techniques.

The great advances made by agricultural research in the United States and the influence it has had in the progress of farming techniques have polarized the attention and interest of Latin American workers in search of better knowledge of specialized subjects. To this must be added the fellowships, in-training grants, and other study facilities provided by important educational institutions and government agencies. Today's scientific agricultural thought in Latin America has its roots in the United States.

In the Caribbean area, this indirect action is strengthened by several United States initiatives, either of private or official character. The Department of Agriculture has established cooperative stations in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and the Department of State has motivated the establishment of the Inter-

American Technical Service of Agricultural Cooperation in Costa Rica. The Rockefeller Foundation has cooperative programs with the Mexican and the Colombian governments, this last one just initiated. Finally, we must mention the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, which derives 75 per cent of its operating income from the United States, and the balance in quotas from other member countries. Hence, we have in this region the bases from which to stimulate research, training, and extension development. All these programs meet many difficulties. An understanding of these problems will help in their solutions, and assure their success and the material progress of agricultural production.

I want to analyze the problems of research in the Caribbean territory as I see them. A discussion of the weaknesses of present research as it is carried on, and of the difficulties that exist for future programs, could excite a real interest in the development of research, and a better understanding of the ways and means in which this end could be attained. For the purposes of this discussion, it will be necessary to generalize. Even though I realize the dangers involved in this procedure, I have to resort to it as the only means of initiating a discussion of these problems.

First we must know the actual attitude toward, and the environment for, research in Latin America. There is a general lack of understanding of what is meant by research. Government officials, very often, have no clear idea of its meaning and delegate this task to men without adequate training. Any professional in possession of a university degree is believed to be able to carry on this kind of work.

Agricultural training at university level is a general profession. A young *ingeniero agrónomo* is supposed to know everything, and to be able to do anything within the wide scope of the profession. Frequently there is not even selection of the best men. It is difficult to understand the lack of value that people in Latin American countries put on this selection. There is little realization of the importance of the human factor, and, unfortunately, in many cases a good man is subordinated because a weak man has greater political influence. High officials feel that they discharge their own responsibility by nominating a man with graduate training; if he fails it is the university that fails. There is even, in some old professional sectors, the same idea of the adequacy of the *ingeniero*

*agronomo* for any kind of function within agriculture. The young professionals, however, are aware of the limitation of their training and have a definite craving for specialization and postgraduate studies.

The lack of comprehension and the absence of stimulation that come from research make uncertain the situation of professionals working in national programs. They have a poor economic standing, and live isolated in experimental stations that many times do not have even the minimum facilities of personnel, equipment, and buildings. Libraries are found only in great urban centers, and they generally do not have modern scientific literature. It is very difficult to develop teamwork under these circumstances. There are few workers, and frequently they have no one with whom to exchange ideas and discuss programs within their fields. Moreover, in many of these countries, such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, there is no university education in the agricultural sciences. This makes very difficult the establishment of research programs.

In the presence of this more or less general situation the cooperative programs have specific functions unique in their importance: the promotion of research; the awakening of national interest in these problems; the opening of opportunities for national technicians to complete their orientation through a period of actual training in the work, so that they may develop later their professional activities; and finally, the solving of problems of agricultural production. We must assure their complete success. It is not an easy task. I will analyze some of the aspects that have to be considered.

One criterion in establishing research is that it must be applied or operational. But this attitude may lead to two extremes. In the first instance, it may result in abandonment of all fundamental research basic for the understanding of the results of agronomic trials. For example, physiological research has been done on a very small scale. If we consider that many plants are unique to the tropics, we can see more than ever how important is this type of research. There are many contradictory results that can be explained only by knowing the internal reactions of the plants.

In the second extreme, only exploratory agronomic trials may result from research. Much time is lost in simple demonstrations

that can teach very little. It is true that a program with a new plant requires some preparatory work to learn many facts that are basic for the establishment of efficient experiments. But this period must be shortened as much as possible in order to begin work that can answer questions of importance in relation to the crop.

We must not forget that we have to develop in these countries a real concept of the importance of research. Work that does not give results in due time loses the confidence of the people. We must also realize that a research program ought to be successful. That is why careful, but realistic, planning is absolutely necessary. Planning too ambitious a program that requires excessive equipment, facilities, and personnel, is out of the question. Projects that will take too many years to develop into a sound group of techniques, either through new knowledge or new and better-adapted varieties, have no chance of ever coming to fruit.

The national character which programs must have in order to awaken interest, and then to continue under local sponsorship after cooperative agreements are terminated, is another fundamental aspect of program organization. The lack of specialized personnel constitutes a great obstacle to the realization of this objective. The situation is more acute in countries that offer no university education in the agricultural sciences. In these countries, only the few nationals trained abroad have the basic preparation required to take postgraduate training. It will be necessary to follow a very slow procedure: first, to create scholarships for undergraduate studies leading to the B.S. or *ingeniero agrónomo* degree; after that, to select the best students for postgraduate work. In an effort to find a solution for this problem, the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, under the Technical Assistance Program of the Organization of American States, has prepared a program of technical education at the undergraduate level. Each year high-school graduates from countries which do not have colleges of agriculture would be selected for training in the universities of Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, or the United States. The best ones could be given a period of postgraduate training at the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, or in an American university. Though this program may require a long time to produce results, it is the only sound way to solve this problem.

The other possible solution—the creation of colleges of agriculture of university level in these countries, such as is being attempted in some of them—is a very difficult one because of the absence of trained workers to teach the different subjects. Colleges too poor in professors and facilities are not a solution to the problem.

Postgraduate training of great numbers of *ingenieros agrónomos* has been accomplished successfully through fellowship grants from such institutions as the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Departments of Agriculture and State. Nevertheless, there is a danger in the mass training of technicians. They go back to their own countries to find all doors closed, and thus become distressed and negative elements. The establishment of research programs is a vital necessity parallel to the training of people. This is something that must be considered in programs such as those of technical assistance.

We must realize that an inexperienced young agronomist, who is trained in a narrow specialization through postgraduate work in the United States, quite often loses his capacity for adaptation to work in his own country. He has experienced wonderful working conditions, with plenty of facilities, coordination, and consultation. When he goes back to his own country, he tries to develop similar working conditions, and he thus feels the need for the same kind of facilities and environment that he found abroad. I have seen several trained people working in fields very different from that of their specialization, only because when they came back they could not get the facilities they considered indispensable. They preferred even to work in another field in which at least they could not make the comparison between what they have seen abroad and what they could have in their own countries.

The Rockefeller Foundation has understood this problem well, and has always given emphasis to the training of people who have their work assured when they return. It has gone one step further still with the development of cooperative projects, first with the Mexican government and later with the Colombian government. In this way, trained people have opportunities to develop further their acquired abilities in an effective and aggressive program. This solution has the added advantage that the training is not only in a university but a very important part of it is in actual work



in the program, previous to and after their period of study in the United States. This is really true training in work.

I was able to develop a successful group-training program in my former work in Chile. The facilities obtained from the Coordinator's Office through Dr. H. A. Moe made it possible to arrange for Dr. H. K. Hayes to visit Chile for a period of four months to give a short course in Plant Breeding. I gathered together a group of eighteen agronomists who already had had some experience in breeding and field experiment work to attend this course. They were keenly interested because they had their own projects to develop, and knew that such training would affect their future success. After the course, they returned to their work. The entire program developed later on by the Chilean Department of Plant Genetics and Agronomy was in the hands of these young men. Later the Rockefeller Foundation and the Department of Agriculture of the United States assisted by providing, through fellowships, further training for many of these men.

An effort should be made in every instance to train nationals, and to give them more and more participation in the work, visualizing always the moment when they will be entirely in charge. Perhaps a date should be set to transfer the responsibility, allowing enough time to accomplish this evolution.

The success of a cooperative program rests in a great measure in the ability to create a feeling of national achievement. This emphasizes the need for true cooperation between foreign and national workers on an equal basis. Programs completely under the leadership of foreigners are very rarely accepted with willingness. And by *foreigner* I mean anyone from abroad. There is always the idea of discrimination and penetration. This is unfortunate, but must be considered. There is little usefulness in a program that is aloof to this situation.

We must contemplate also that the real value of a research program is in its capacity to produce a true impact in the improvement of the agriculture of a country by finding new methods of work and by transferring its findings to the country in general. The extension of knowledge and its acceptance by the people is the ultimate aim of a research program. It is in this aspect that most programs developed up to now reveal the greatest weakness.

We must consider that a North American worker meets great

difficulties in his work in these countries. His highly specialized training, and his studies under ideal conditions, do not constitute a good basis for his adaptation to totally different environments. In general he has a poor knowledge of the Spanish language, which compels him to live in isolation, maintaining social intercourse only with his countrymen. Moreover, his economic standing, much higher than that of national technicians, places him in a group apart. Many of the physical situations mentioned when dealing with the work of national technicians apply also in his case, but even more seriously. Everything will come short of what is found commonly in research centers of the United States. Therefore, it is difficult for him to comprehend the problems, to study them objectively, and to identify himself with the country to the point of considering it as his own.

Few North American workers come to these countries with the idea of remaining for a long period. Quite often living conditions in the regions where the work is carried on are not favorable; there are no schools for English-speaking children, and sometimes they must live in the cities, very far away. All this makes it difficult to create a true comradeship and friendship between North American and national workers, which results in a lack of inspiration for the nationals. The ideal technical work situation is not between superior and subordinate but between leaders and cooperators. But to achieve this, a mutual understanding is required which is very difficult to obtain among elements so fundamentally different because of their idiosyncracies, preparation, and way of living.

Solutions must be original and adapted to the region. Too much damage has been done by simply adapting solutions brought from temperate areas. For instance, the improvement of dairy cattle has been made by mixing *criollo* types with purebreds maintaining a factorial equilibrium. This has achieved only the elimination of the true *criollo* adapted to the environment through a long period of natural selection. At the institute, *criollo* Nicaraguan cows competed advantageously in milk production with pseudo-improved half-breeds as well as the purebreds that were suffering because of the climate. It is neither possible nor advisable to rush from the machete age to the machine age. This can bring about a true breakage of native civilizations.

At this moment I think it is worth while to examine briefly the

program of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, because its objectives are in harmony with those I am trying to describe in this paper. This is an institution which is dedicated mainly to research but which also gives postgraduate training. It is maintained by the different American countries by quotas proportionate to the number of inhabitants in each. The program is oriented to the study of methods of work adapted to the environmental conditions prevalent in these countries. Complicated methodologies are not always feasible in regions with different types of problems. Any program that takes too many years of work is in danger of not reaching its objectives. Simpler and shorter methods very often give results that mean greater progress.

The procedures followed in the corn and potato programs at the institute illustrate the methods used there. In the corn-breeding program, the institute is comparing six different breeding methods in order to evaluate their relative capacity with reference to double crosses. In addition, comprehensive studies of germ plasm are under way with the idea of later obtaining pools of genes adapted to different altitudes. A mixture of this germ plasm will be given to neighboring countries which have no current breeding program. From this mixture, each country can develop improved corn varieties by using simple selection methods. Emphasis is placed on the possibility of giving effective service with the foundation stock and instructions about the method of procedure in order that the national technicians may develop their own material.

The potato program also seeks to give service in a short term. Thanks to the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture and Cornell University, the institute is receiving samples of clones obtained in the genetic programs of these organizations. Quite often the lines which perform well in the tropics were those that did not show adaptation to the conditions in the United States. The testing of this material has already permitted the selection of several clones which show a much higher tolerance to *Phytophthora infestans*, and which yield from two to three times more than the native varieties.

In both instances the programs are carried on only to the evaluation of improved plant material, and do not cover the production and direct distribution of improved seed. A preliminary test on the

cooperation procedures to be used on the production and distribution of the improved varieties is taking place in Costa Rica, by agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture. Corn material is being increased in the experiment station of the ministry for its distribution to the farmers. Potato foundation stock is being increased by the ministry under certification, also with assistance from the institute.

The coffee program also has as one of its objectives the production of improved plant material by simple procedures in a relatively short time. The Costa Rican Ministry of Agriculture will begin soon to test these selections in its own fields, following a plan for the production of seeds.

Especially with reference to typical plants of this region, like coffee, the program is much wider, covering methods of breeding, agronomic trials, physiological, entomological, and pathological studies. In addition to the research program conducted at the Turrialba experiment station, close cooperation has been established with the Colombian coffee program. Mutual visits of technicians from the institute and Colombia have strengthened this cooperation. There is also underway a cost-of-production study on coffee farms. Several technicians from Campinas, Brazil, have visited Turrialba, and one of them worked at the institute for four months. In an effort to stimulate the development of research in other Caribbean countries and to coordinate the actual programs, a technical meeting of coffee workers was called in October by the Coffee Federation of Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. A concept of the importance of research among the coffee producers is gaining root.

The institute is a new organization which still has not enough means to develop more extensive work, but the orientation of its different programs may have the virtue of stimulating in an effective way the development of national research. The procedure being used is calculated to avoid the situations described above. Special emphasis is given to help and collaboration in the development of a program in which the direct benefit to the farmer is left in charge of national technicians.

We have mentioned only some of the aspects of the program and only those within the plant industry department. It is not possible in this discussion to explain the whole program, which

includes animal industry, economics and rural life, agricultural engineering, extension programs, and scientific communications. I have given only a few examples to define objectives and to explain the methods by which we hope to reach them.

I am convinced that the institute, to which the United States is so effectively contributing, constitutes an adequate tool for the promotion of research. It is an international institution whose action does not provoke suspicion. The different countries use its services, knowing they come from something they own. Within its personnel there are today North Americans, Mexicans, Haitians, Costa Ricans, Colombians, Peruvians, Bolivians, and Chileans. All these Latin Americans have received training in the United States, and many of them have the Ph.D. degree. They form a mixture of mentalities of different extractions working together for the same objective: the development of a program of true Inter-American significance.

Among the fifty-five graduate students that have received training at the institute, fifteen came from the United States. Almost all of them have shown interest in working in the tropics, have come to know tropical problems, and can become well-trained elements especially prepared to work in programs of research in the Caribbean area.

The importance of an international approach to research is enhanced by the great diversity of ecological environments that are found in these countries. In Costa Rica, for instance, there are different ecological conditions within distances of a few miles, so that results of localized experiments are not applicable to extensive areas of this country. It is easier to find similar ecological areas in different countries because they repeat themselves in different geographical regions. Programs of international character can use better the experience that in one country will have a strictly local application.

In summary, a few conclusions may help to clarify the role of the United States in the development of fundamental research in Caribbean agriculture.

1. A research program developed by cooperation between a nation and a foreign agency must be closely integrated with national interests and ideals. Only thus may it be considered an important

national enterprise, eventually to be directed and managed by nationals.

2. In many of the countries of the Caribbean region, there is no agricultural teaching at university level. It is necessary to encourage the formation of a group of professionals, preferably through fellowships which allow study in Caribbean universities or in the United States.

3. The preparation to work in research programs can be obtained only through graduate training. Countries like Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, and Haiti already have many professionals trained in these studies. In countries without university teaching of agricultural sciences it would be necessary first to stimulate training at the undergraduate level as indicated above. Graduate training could then be given to the best students.

4. The training of specialists will not bear fruit if opportunities for their employment are not created. Cooperative research programs would have the value of fulfilling this objective, offering at the same time opportunity for in-service training.

5. Research must be applied or operational, and must be conducted without forgetting that plants and animals of these regions are typical of them. Solutions must be original, and not simply adapted from temperate climates, and must be adequate to the environment in which they are to be applied. It must not be forgotten that many of the problems of Caribbean agriculture are unique to this region. Therefore it is imperative to conduct fundamental research which can be complementary to strictly operational research.

I have attempted to state in this paper some basic ideas in relation to the problem that I consider of great importance. Facing the need to stimulate the agricultural advancement of these regions, we ought to perceive clearly the difficulties involved.

The United States has shown its willingness to assume its share of this responsibility. We must assure the success of the generous assistance the United States is giving to the development of fundamental research in the Caribbean countries. This we must do for the benefit of all the countries in the Americas, so that for those who receive it, such benefit may result in genuine advance, and for those who give it, such generosity may yield the moral fruits of such a noble enterprise.

Ramón Colón-Torres: PROGRAMMING FOR THE  
UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES  
IN PUERTO RICO

I AM here to discuss briefly with you some of the recent agricultural developments in Puerto Rico, especially in relation to the intensive and balanced utilization of land resources. Let me avail myself of the opportunity to thank President J. Hillis Miller for his kind invitation to be with you during this most important gathering of authorities on the different aspects of life in what one of our participants, Señor Germán Arciniegas, has called "Our Sea." It is hard to think of a more fitting place than the University of Florida to hold this conference on the Caribbean at Mid-Century. History tells us that we are more or less bound by the dreams of don Juan Ponce de León, who, starting from Santo Domingo, decidedly set his foot in Puerto Rico—he was our first governor—and then, in search of the mythical fountain of youth, discovered Florida and went back, without health and without youth, to die in Cuba. Our old Captain certainly deserves the title of Roving Knight of the Caribbean.

Let us now briefly review the physical features of my country. Geographically, Puerto Rico is the most easterly of the Greater Antilles. It is bound by the Atlantic Ocean on the north, the Caribbean Sea on the south, the Virgin Passage on the east, and the Mona Passage on the west. It is about 1,600 miles southeast of New York City and 1,065 air miles from Miami.

Around its coasts there is a narrow fertile plain which rises gradually toward the interior in a series of mountainous ranges

which occupy the major portion of the island's surface. The highest range rises to an altitude of about 4,000 feet. These mountains, which run from east to west, are broken by intervening deep narrow valleys of great beauty and fertility.

In Puerto Rico, as in all islands, the topography governs the rainfall. Because of the mountains, between northeast and south central, a distance of only 69 miles, there is a difference of yearly rainfall of 173 inches. The average rainfall is 60 inches for the north coastal plain, 30 inches for the southern plain, and 100 inches for the mountain region. The Caribbean National Forest is a typical rain forest, with original growth of all kinds, almost jungle-like in density and variety of trees, vines, and shrub life. But do not be impressed by rainfall data: San Juan enjoys 360 days of sunshine a year.

Puerto Rico, being 1,000 miles out at sea, receives in full measure the trade winds which blow almost constantly from the northeast. This continued flow of breeze is the secret of its ideal climate. The mean January temperature for the island as a whole is 73 degrees F. and the mean July temperature is 79 degrees, a range of only 6 degrees.

Bird life on the island is scarce. There are no poisonous snakes or insects. In the surrounding waters there are 291 species of fishes.

In spite of its small size—100 miles long by 36 miles wide—Puerto Rico is a land of contrasts. Within its 3,500 square miles of territory one finds 128 soil series with 327 different types and phases of soil; seven distinct areas of rainfall, ranging from 200 inches in the northeast mountains to 30 inches in the southwest coastal plain.

Such, in a nutshell, is the physical portrait of Puerto Rico. But the problems involved in the balanced development of a modern and progressive community of 2,200,000 people—an average of 645 per square mile—becloud this portrait, otherwise so clear and serene, with dramatic shades of the utmost human concern.

It may be readily seen that the pressure of population on the land is tremendous. But, with no other natural resources than the soil, it seems very logical that our hopes for a decent livelihood should be founded on a victorious productive effort on the soil. Therefore there is need for a great dedication, which must be continuously strengthened, to the task of constantly increasing agricultural production in Puerto Rico.



By now you may have an idea as to my motive for selecting, as the subject for my talk, *Programming for the Intensive and Balanced Utilization of Agricultural Resources in Puerto Rico*.

### *I. Reorientation of the Land-Use Pattern*

That American territory—the only one under the American flag which was trod by Columbus—aspires to live a full democratic life and to enjoy, with the rest of the nation, the four freedoms so well conceived and upheld by the late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But, according to modern standards, such a legitimate aspiration can be realized only when a country is able to bring about a sound and balanced development of its economy, together with all other elements of a physical and moral character. Because the island lacks that ideal condition—regardless of its unquestionable progress—it may be considered an underdeveloped area. Why so? Because of its excessive dependence on a very limited number of commercial crops for export; its lack of well-organized marketing facilities and know-how; its institutionalized latifundia; the concentration of its limited wealth in a few hands; and the lack of adequate sources of capital for general economic development, especially for industrialization. In areas where these conditions prevail, the end result is a low income per capita and unsatisfactory levels of living. If to these basic shortcomings of an overspecialized agricultural economy, limited market outlets for the traditional commercial crops, poorly organized marketing facilities and services, and concentration of land and wealth, we add an undesirable land-use pattern from the standpoint of conservation of resources, and a tremendous density of population, we may then realize that the battle we must fight for the full conquest of the four freedoms is a challenging ordeal to everybody concerned.

When such is the case, one can readily see again why the imperative need, in the domain of agricultural activity, is for maximizing production through the intensive and judicious use of every inch of land available. This is the basic reason for the reorientation program that has been going on in Puerto Rico for the past ten years. This reorientation aims at a balanced agricultural production. In this context it must be stated that although there is still ample room for sugar-cane production, it is not possible to forget

the market contingencies to which this enterprise is subject, all of which contrasts with the needs of a progressive and dynamic economy.

## *II. A Four-Point Program for Coordinated Action*

Such circumstances have necessarily led us to look for new frontiers, and hence has come the enunciation of our four-point program, to wit:

1. Develop an intensive and balanced utilization of the agricultural resources of the island, with special emphasis on the mountain areas. This includes, among other things, the stimulating of adequate resource-conservation programs, fostering the production of milk and dairy products, expanding the commercial production of fruits and vegetables, and reorienting fiscal policy towards the achievement of these and other ends.
2. Improve sources of capital and credit for agricultural production and industrialization, especially for small-scale producers.
3. Develop an efficient marketing system for farm products. This includes development of "know-how," establishment of necessary facilities, grades, standards, inspection services, agricultural processing, and the like.
4. Develop group action in the rural areas and promote such patterns of rural community organization as may facilitate both productive action and a fuller enjoyment of life.

In expounding on this program it is not my intention to deliver an academic lecture, but, rather, to call your attention to the work that is actually going on in Puerto Rico along these particular lines of applied modern agricultural economics and, incidentally, to bring forth the procedures and techniques employed in such a task. In this respect you will find some very interesting results, and even some original ideas which sprang up when we were facing our special problems in the light of our particular situations and prevailing socio-economic climate.

## *III. An Over-All Program for Developing Agriculture*

The first step to carry out these objectives has been the making of a land-classification study whereby all the factors making up present land utilization and potential uses are considered. The job has consisted principally in bringing together available information

on physical land features and in analyzing economic and institutional factors leading to present land-use patterns. On the basis of this information an over-all program for developing agriculture in the island is being evolved. This is a job that cannot be done without the assistance of experts on the matter, particularly from the United States Department of Agriculture, which has been active in various fields of agriculture in the island. For this very same reason, moreover, action to be recommended must be co-ordinated with federal agricultural programs in order to maximize results. To facilitate this coordination, during the past year I have been able to obtain a commitment from the Secretary of Agriculture that the United States Department of Agriculture would participate in formulating this over-all program through specialists in the various fields.

Instituting this program will entail a reappraisal of the agriculture of the island with a view to bringing about proper land use, establishing improved cropping systems, approaching the problems of mechanization, and doing such other things as may be necessary to improve the production output and efficiency essential to achieve an intensive and balanced utilization of the agricultural resources of Puerto Rico.

Dr. A. B. Lewis, Land-Use Officer of the Foreign Agricultural Organization, has made the following comments on the work that is being accomplished in this direction:

A brief review of the work being done in Puerto Rico should serve as an inspiration for the initiation of similar studies in other parts of the Caribbean Area. It is doubtful if any country in the world is more active than Puerto Rico in establishing a sound and factual basis for its land improvement program.

The present land-use classification study in Puerto Rico presents an opportunity to demonstrate how studies made and data collected by a number of different agencies for their own special purposes may be collated and used as a means of making an economic interpretation of fundamental variations in the land and also to demonstrate how this interpretation, in the form of an economic landclass map and associated data, can be profitably used as a foundation for a land improvement program by all the contributing agencies and many others.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Lewis, "Soil Conservation and Fertility: Land Improvement Programs." A paper prepared at the request of the Caribbean Commission of the West Indian Conference, Fourth Session, 1950.

*IV. Opening New Land Frontiers*

The over-all program being formulated for developing the agricultural resources will have as one of its more meaningful results—at least such are our hopes—the opening of new land areas for intensive agricultural activity. Improvements in technology that may be forthcoming from the study, as well as the correct orientation of developmental action in agriculture, will provide a sound economic basis for new productive ventures on the land.

In this direction, however, creative activity should be continuously in the making. In that respect, I should point out that we are already opening new land frontiers as one of the measures to help in the solution of point one of our program. The Puerto Rico Water Resources Authority, for example, has undertaken the development of the hydroelectric and irrigation project of the Lajas Valley on the southwest of the island. This project covers 26,000 acres of land and will eventually cost \$23,000,000. A similar project is under consideration to provide irrigation to 4,000 acres more. In the line of muck-land reclamation, work is being done which will eventually add a sizable area of excellent land to the total agricultural resources of the island.

Soils in Puerto Rico are generally very acid. A survey of lime needs has placed the requirements of this soil amendment at around 2,000,000 tons in order to establish an acidity level favorable to most of the crops of the island. Providing this condition is very important from the standpoint of insuring bigger and better-quality crops, improving the health of animals and maintaining the productivity of the soil.

As an approach to this situation a soil-liming program has been established under the Department of Agriculture. A number of plants, with a capacity to produce well over 50,000 tons annually, have been erected in different points of the island to grind calcium carbonate of the best grade and sell it to farmers at cost. Plans are underway to provide transportation of the lime to the farms.

*V. Conservation of the Resources of the Coffee Region*

One of our chief concerns is the mountainous region of the island, where coffee on the western end and tobacco on the eastern

part are the main cash crops. These areas are loaded with possibilities for a more intensive and balanced agriculture; but at the same time they are harassed by many problems which demand special attention on our part. Coffee farming means more than the cultivation of the beautiful berries that produce the well-known delicious and enticing beverage. For Puerto Rico coffee farming represents an orderly forest project which has all the advantages of the ordinary forest cover. This is most important from the standpoint of conserving the soil and water resources of the island. Yet the coffee enterprise, so important in this and other respects to the island's economy, has been terribly depressed. Technological progress in the coffee region has remained considerably behind the needs of a dynamic agriculture. Yields of coffee have stood for quite a number of years at very low levels. Many orchards have been cut over for the planting of sugar cane and other clean-cultivated crops.

As a result there has been increased silting of the reservoirs, built by the Water Resources Authority, which have their catchment areas in the coffee region. Rather wide areas have had to be abandoned because of excessive soil erosion and consequent improductivity. This gave rise to the spectacle of a continuous flow of people, who for generations had lived in the coffee region, being washed down into the city slums. Under the circumstances coffee farming seemed definitely on its way to disappear. Something positive had to be done to halt this washing away of both soil and people.

The approach to this dilemma has been the unified program for the conservation of resources in the coffee region, sponsored by all insular and federal agricultural agencies, and started two years ago. This is a well-rounded program of resources conservation which includes incentive payments to farmers for performing certain intensive cultivation practices, such as terracing, liming, and application of fertilizer, which also have a high soil and water conservation value. Over \$1,000,000 are being provided annually for this program. The aim is to improve coffee yields to the point where the coffee grower can stand on his own feet and a sound, permanent economic structure can be developed in the coffee region.

*VI. Improvements of Crops and Livestock*

In the promotion of an intensive and balanced utilization of the agricultural resources, we have realized that truck-gardening and improvements of such fruits as pineapples, bananas, papayas, and oranges, and of the starchy and leafy vegetables for the local market, are of paramount importance. Research on these particular crops, as well as in other phases of agriculture that contribute to the proposed reorientation, is one of the main features of the various agricultural activities of our government. This work is entrusted to the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Puerto Rico. As an aid to the over-all research program, a number of substations have been established throughout the island, given entirely to the solution of the typical problems in the different agricultural districts. Research work is complemented by the activities of seed production farms which provide improved seeds to meet the requirements of up-to-date farming.

In a well-rounded program of agriculture, improvement of livestock should be one of the principal objectives. It will not be amiss to dwell on the subject for a while. The Department of Agriculture has taken the lead in formulating a coordinated action program for the development of the dairy industry of the island with a forward target, for the coming ten years, of trebling total milk supply through a doubling of yield per cow and an increase of 50 per cent in the number of dairy stock. All parties concerned—farmers and agricultural agencies, both insular and federal—are properly integrated in working towards the attainment of this goal. This program includes, through the corresponding action in the fields of research, education, and services, the improvement of animals, pasture improvement, the development of new sources of feeds, and feeding methods and improvements in the marketing system for milk.

Two examples of our efforts in implementing this program are represented, first, by a recently established broad artificial-insemination service in combination with a chain of breeding centers in areas where the operation of that service might prove uneconomical; and, secondly, by the establishing of central stock farms to be geared with existing and expanded credit facilities for the purchase of improved reproductive stock by the farmer.

Allow me to add, on this same subject, that through the activities of our Veterinary Services, aided by those of the Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture, the incidence of bovine tuberculosis in the island has been reduced to just 0.09 per cent, and, consequently, Puerto Rico is now among the tuberculosis-accredited areas of the United States.

### *VII. Improving the Sources of Capital and Credits*

The lack of adequate sources of credit—and this brings us to point two of our program—is a great stumbling block to our agricultural development. Although all federal credit agencies are engaged in providing financing facilities for farmers in Puerto Rico, with total lending operations for production credit alone amounting to \$15,000,000 per year, we find that this is not enough to meet the credit requirements of all our farmers. Only 12,000 of them, at the most, are benefited by the activities of the federal credit agencies, and the bulk of this credit is extended to producers of only two crops—sugar cane and tobacco. A good 80 per cent of the farmers do not have the privilege of such facilities. Plans are underway to correct this deficiency through the establishment of an insular counterpart of the federal credit agencies to supplement, as far as may be possible, existing credit facilities. The Puerto Rico Planning Board has already recommended, as part of its Six-Year Financial Program to be submitted to the Puerto Rico Legislature, an appropriation of \$2,000,000 for this purpose. Another healthy sign of growth has been the recent organization of a Banking Committee for Agriculture by the private banking institutions of the island. Furthermore, under the industrial aid program sponsored by both the Puerto Rico Development Bank and the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company, industrial activity in agriculture is also being promoted.

It is a known fact that we need an extensive development of industry, especially industries based on agricultural products. For that purpose we have embarked ourselves in the encouragement of an industrial program whose objective is to aid in broadening the economic base of the island, and thereby bring proper means of livelihood for our continuously increasing population, which has a birth rate of 40 per thousand—typical of an entirely agricultural

community—and a death rate of 10.7 per thousand—typical of eminently industrial centers. The industrial entrepreneur coming to our shores will find a government willing and ready to lend him a hand in his efforts to establish an industry in Puerto Rico. After examining the merits of the case, the Government of Puerto Rico is ready to dispense with taxes for a period of ten years, and is even ready to construct a building to meet the requirements of the newly come industry. I am sorry that time and space do not allow me to dwell on this subject of industrial development. It is, however, worthwhile mentioning that we are ready to celebrate the establishment in Puerto Rico of the hundredth new industry under the developmental program recently inaugurated.

I wish to state, before leaving this subject, that Puerto Rico is not interested in attracting industries already operating in the mainland to come to the island solely because of its encouragement policies. We are not interested in the transfer of industries from one part of the nation's economy to another part of that same economy. Puerto Rico is interested in offering its privileged location in the Caribbean to attract those who are thinking of establishing new kinds of industry, or those who are planning to expand their present industrial activities in order to serve better the nations' economy of which Puerto Rico is a part.

#### *VIII. Developing an Efficient Marketing System*

Point three of our program calls for the development of an efficient marketing system for agricultural produce. Following accepted planning principles, we have proceeded to make a careful survey of the existing marketing facilities as a prerequisite to the preparation of a comprehensive marketing program. The over-all objective is to bring order out of chaos in the local market situation, and to foster, first, an orderly way of supplying consumers in Puerto Rico with locally produced products, and, secondly, our overseas markets in continental United States, as well as in foreign countries. In all this planning process we have had the cooperation of the Marketing and Research Facilities Branch of the United States Department of Agriculture. The first stage in planning marketing facilities has been completed with the proposed establishment of an integrated wholesale produce market in the metro-



politan area of San Juan, at an estimated cost of \$9,000,000. The preliminary financial program for the year 1951-1952, under consideration by the Puerto Rico Legislature, includes an appropriation of \$2,500,000 for initiating the first stages of this facility.

Simultaneously, and as a second prerequisite to an efficient marketing system, an intensive training program in marketing "know-how" has been initiated. Fourteen technicians have been sent to the mainland to take special intensive training in such fields as market management, the establishing of grades and standards, market inspection work, and agricultural processing.

Right here in the College of Agriculture of the University of Florida two of our men are receiving part of the knowledge with which they should be equipped for efficient service in this field. Three others, trained under the guidance of the United States Department of Agriculture Marketing Inspection Service, had the privilege of making part of their field practice in the excellent farmers' markets of this state. A number of these men have already gone back to Puerto Rico and are beginning to exercise a healthy influence on the market organization of the island.

Our inspection and regulatory services in this field are already coordinated with the Processed Products Inspection Division of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Just to show how the scientific application of "know-how" in all these fields will eventually reap benefits, I would like to mention, as an example of the value of improved marketing techniques in fruit processing what is actually happening to the pineapple industry. In the first place, pineapple farmers have formed an organization with the avowed purpose of standardizing the fresh fruit which is shipped under refrigeration to continental United States and also the processed pineapple that is canned. Canneries are being revamped and the machinery used brought up to date so that the presentation of the product will be uniform in quality as well as in appearance. In the department under my supervision there exists a laboratory, jointly operated with the Processed Products Inspection Division of the United States Department of Agriculture, to inspect processed pineapple products in the island. Our aim is to develop a canning industry that will be able to deliver the right product for the market.

As a part of this same endeavor towards improved marketing services, we are stimulating the organization of marketing cooperatives as the best means of assuring the small producer all the economic advantages accruing in the handling of a large volume of business.

### *IX. Improving Rural Community Organization*

The imperative demands of modern agriculture, coupled with the problems of Puerto Rico, are pushing us to the organization of cooperatives of all sorts. Such associations are developed in accordance with Point Four of our program, which calls for proper group action in the rural areas and the promotion of such patterns of rural community organization as may facilitate both productive action and a fuller enjoyment of life. To this end, the General Cooperatives Act of 1946 was enacted to improve existing legislation on cooperatives. This act, which is considered a model of its kind, provides for educational and regulatory services which guarantee the successful organization and operation of cooperatives. A Department of Cooperatives operates in the Extension Service of the University of Puerto Rico. It is properly coordinated with all other extension activities in agriculture and home improvement. In the Department of Agriculture and Commerce there is the Office of the Inspector of Cooperatives of Puerto Rico. In addition, a cooperative education program develops its activities in connection with the land reform instituted by the Land Law of Puerto Rico enacted on April 12, 1941.

At the beginning of this talk I referred to the problem of institutionalized latifundia and the concentration of wealth in a few hands as one of the features of the economy of Puerto Rico. This is not the best system for developing an intensive and balanced utilization of agricultural resources and of assuring a high sense of economic and social security to those who toil on the land.

Land reform has long been considered a necessary measure to rural improvement in Puerto Rico. A small-scale homestead program was initiated in 1921. Land reform activities of a broader nature were undertaken by the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration between 1935 and 1938. In the latter year the activities of the Farm Security Administration, now Farmers' Home

Administration, were extended to the island. All these efforts were, by no means, of sufficient coverage to cope with the magnitude of the problem. By 1940 farms with over 500 acres, which constituted 0.6 per cent of the total number of farms in the island, controlled 35 per cent of the total land in farms.

A year later a broad land reform program was inaugurated under the Land Law of Puerto Rico referred to above. The Land Law makes it compulsory for corporations violating the land clause of the Organic Act passed by the United States Congress in 1900 to restrict their possession of land to 500 acres. The excess land, after proper compensation, was to revert to the government. Steps were immediately taken to organize the Land Authority of Puerto Rico in the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce to foster the land reform.

An important measure produced by the reform has been the device known as the proportional profit farm. The idea originated with our present governor, the Honorable Luis Muñoz Marín. This is a new and interesting scheme of land tenure through which the advantages of large-scale operation are maintained at the same time that a better distribution of income is secured. The method is specially adaptable to sugar-cane farming because, as you all know, the profitable production of sugar cane calls for the use of heavy, expensive farm machinery, irrigation, and other capital investments that must be used over large extensions of land.

Proportional profit farms are in charge of a manager under a rental contract. After the crop is harvested and all operating expenses are met, including taxes, rental charges, administrative expenses, the setting aside of reserves and of two thirds of 1 per cent of the gross income to help develop cooperative education programs, the net profit obtained is divided between management and labor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The manager of one of these farms has a right to participate up to 15 per cent in whatever benefit is to be distributed. The rest goes to the laborers and is issued to them in proportion to the wages earned during the year. Lessees of proportional profit farms get an advance payment of \$45 a week plus living quarters. There are instances in which a laborer has received as much as three or four hundred dollars as his share in the profits. Of course, when a farm is not able to cover expenses the deficit is charged against it in the account books, because in succeeding years the profits obtained are used to cover the debt. In no case will the Land Authority provide funds to patch up deficits in the system.

A total of forty-nine proportional profit farms have been already established, and about \$3,000,000 in profits have been paid out to both laborers and lessees.

Another interesting feature of the land-reform program has been the resettlement, so far, of 25,000 squatter families in 170 rural communities, thereby remaking the scattered pattern of rural settlement existing in Puerto Rico. The rural communities or villages, so organized, run from 100 to 500 families. They are designed according to the most progressive principles in rural community planning. The design provides for the establishment of such services and facilities as schools, health centers, parks, consumer cooperatives, churches, and community pastures. The subdivision contemplates the most economic means for providing streets, water, and electric facilities. To this end, the physical setting is of crucial importance. Furthermore, it helps to provide the proper climate for community life, which, in turn, facilitates cooperative education and direct group action. The Community Action Program, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, has shown that mutual aid and self-help thrive best where an integrated community life exists.

The creation of family-type farms is also a feature of the new Land Reform. This is the counterpart to the Farmers' Home Administration Program, and aims to supplement the activities of the Farm Ownership Program of that agency in Puerto Rico. It is conceived on the principle that, in addition to the agrarian ideology and high esteem of rural life, the family farm has a place in the island's agricultural economy on the basis of its performance as an efficient unit of production. The topography of the island, and the nature of the crops grown, point to the family farm as an answer to a better land utilization, especially in the highlands.

The Cooperative Education Program, to which reference has been made before, is financed by the proportional profit farms. Because the Land Reform has given the laborers a greater social responsibility, it has been considered necessary to provide the means through which they are enabled to understand better their position in the over-all program. The success of the land-tenure reform will continue to depend to a large extent on this education program, which we have called "a training school for democracy in action."

*X. Integration of Agricultural Activities*

If I am to attempt a summary of the efforts of the government on behalf of agriculture I should certainly like to use the word coordination. In Puerto Rico a good deal of coordination in government programs is being sought through the work of the Insular Planning Board, together with the Insular Bureau of the Budget. These are staff services in the Office of the Governor which examine proposals for capital and operational expenditures made by the different government agencies. Their aim is to help allocate the use of available public funds so that they yield the best results in servicing the needs of the people.

When it comes down to agriculture, we have an arrangement which puts the agricultural extension work and agricultural experimentation in the hands of the University of Puerto Rico, while developmental and regulatory services are under the Department of Agriculture. The Federal Government, through the different branches of its Department of Agriculture, also performs a good number of activities related to the different fields.

This loose organization, which is due to requirements beyond our control, does not provide ideal conditions for coordinated action. The result has been much duplication of effort, dispersion of activity, and the lack of a common approach to the problems of agriculture. Under the circumstances, it has been my privilege to advocate, and establish as a working policy, the adoption of coordinated action in developing the different agricultural programs. Work in unison is creating the proper environment so necessary for an integrated approach to every problem and objective.

The procedure is very simple. The heads of the different agencies, together with their specialists in the problem that is to be tackled, are called upon to meet. The aims are to define the problem and learn of its magnitude; to discuss and agree on the solutions and their order of importance; and to arrive at a balanced and unified program of work in accord with the facilities available and the objectives to be attained.

We are already reaping the fruits from this procedure. The over-all land-utilization program, the coordinated action program for the development of the dairy industry, and the unified coffee conservation program are examples of the healthful integrating of

efforts and activity among all branches of agriculture to accelerate and maximize results.

The development of a balanced utilization of resources in a country long attached to an overspecialized economy requires a special set of conditions which only very purposeful and creative action can provide. The job looms larger when the means with which to work are scarce and the needs to fulfill are extremely great. Such is the case of programming for agricultural development in Puerto Rico. Every step in that direction must be taken with the highest sense of devotion and desire for achievement. Our people's need is that the scanty resources at their disposal be transformed into a permanent source of bountiful wealth and happiness which may enable them to enjoy fully the blessings of democratic life. The strife that must engage us in achieving this goal is what our present governor and great statesman, Luis Muñoz Marín, has called the battle for the good life. Agriculture must play a leading role in the battle for increased production, indispensable for full victory in that higher endeavor. With respect to the responsibilities in Puerto Rico that face us as agricultural scientists, farmers, laborers, and friends of the land, and to the need of maximizing production through the intensive and judicious use of every acre of land available, it will not be amiss to quote from one of Governor Muñoz' messages to the legislature of the island:

The battle for the good life must have a good part of its emphasis placed on agriculture. In Puerto Rico there is still much land which is not in use, or used ineffectually. Morally it is a serious offense to put obstacles in the path of using the soil in a community that has so little of it, or to refuse to understand its better uses. In Puerto Rico no one has a right to basically impede production. With the good will of all we should expect that in a few years—may they be not many—there will not be a single acre of tillable soil which is not being used in the way best adapted to the highest productivity of that acre. With close cooperation of the Legislature and the Executive and all the agricultural agencies, and the farmers and workers, and public opinion in general, we must undertake to perform this great economic feat.

*Part IV*

*SOCIOLOGICAL AND  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS  
OF THE CARIBBEAN AREA*





## John Gillin: IS THERE A MODERN CARIBBEAN CULTURE?

IF ONE analyzes carefully the patterns of action, thought, and social organization which characterize the contemporary peoples of the Western Hemisphere, one is soon able to distinguish two basic types of modern culture or civilization in this half of the world, the Latin American and the Anglo-American. Both are varieties of Western civilization, but both are blends or syntheses which include not only European elements, but also features derived from the native Indian cultures as well as original inventions made in recent times in the New World. However, the basic premises, as well as much of the content and organization of the Latin American culture, differ significantly from those of the Anglo-American variety. Knowing these differences, one is able to explain and to a degree predict the actions and attitudes of Latin Americans as compared with those of Anglo-Americans. I have published this view previously, and several of my anthropological and sociological colleagues and I have adduced evidence that seems to support it. The work is continuing, and we hope to have in the not-too-distant future something resembling a fairly precise and definitive analysis of these two dominant varieties of Western Hemisphere civilization in terms that can be readily applied to practical situations. The main practical value of scientific studies of culture, as I see them, resides in the power they may confer upon us to explain certain apparent enigmas of human behavior and to predict probable social action in foreseeable situations in the future.

If one agrees that there are, in fact, two major forms of modern civilization which govern the social behavior of the majority of human beings in the Western Hemisphere, it is tempting to leap to the conclusion that what is not Anglo-American must be Latin American, and vice versa. Such a view is patently not true to the facts. For one thing, it leaves out of account about twelve million native Indians who still follow basically aboriginal patterns of culture. Although not "modern men" in the cultural sense, these Indians are nevertheless human beings and far from insignificant numerically. Everything indicates that they will eventually become acculturated to one or other of the modern civilizations, but another hundred years may pass before the process is complete.

Of more interest to this conference is the fact that the "either Latin or Anglo" simplification also ignores the situation in one of the most thickly populated regions of the Hemisphere, namely, the Caribbean. Is this region culturally Latin American, Anglo-American, European, African, native Indian, or what? Is it a mosaic of different cultures, or has it produced a blend which might be regarded as a modern Caribbean culture?

It does not matter greatly whether we define the Caribbean so as to include only the islands, or so as to encompass the Antilles as well as the adjacent continental shores and mainland areas facing the sea. Either way you look at the Caribbean the answers to these questions are essentially the same.

Is there a single basic pattern of Caribbean culture or civilization? The answer is, No. There is not now and there never has been, so far as evidence indicates. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility that cultural uniformity may develop in the future.

The last attempt to unify at least the islands culturally—and this effort had good prospects of success—was cut short by the intrusion of Columbus and sundry other Europeans four hundred and fifty years ago. The Carib Indians were the imperialists of their day in the Caribbean, and at the time of the Discovery were engaged in a progressive conquest of the West Indies, apparently having started perhaps a hundred years earlier from a mainland base in Venezuela. At the time of Columbus' surprise entrance they had about one-third of the island area forcibly converted to their way of thinking and doing, and had proved themselves militarily if not culturally superior to the more peaceful Arawaks who occupied

most of the West Indies. Without compunction in dispatching their Arawak male victims, the Caribs nevertheless formed unions with conquered Arawak females, who continued to speak their own language and presumably to teach their offspring some features of Arawak culture, which was comparatively well developed in the peaceful arts and in social organization. Thus a process of cultural and physical amalgamation was going on which in the course of time would probably have resulted in a fairly uniform Caribbean native culture and physical type. However, there is little profit for us here to pursue at length the story of the truncated Carib conquest, because it was brought to an abrupt halt by the invasion of piously bellicose Spaniards, French, Dutch, and English who reduced both the Carib imperialists and their Arawak subjects not only to subjugation, but eventually to practical extinction.

The Caribs and the Arawaks, as well as the followers of the somewhat "lower" Ciboney culture of Cuba and Hispaniola, have disappeared from the Indies, except for a few hundred on a reservation in Dominica and the so-called "Black Caribs" of the Honduran coast. But the native cultures have left their mark on the customs and artifacts of the present day. Many of the staple food products, certain features of peasant house construction, some of the witchcraft and curing practices and beliefs, stray words and phrases of everyday conversation—these have stayed. You might say that they are the remnants of a Carib empire that might have been, debris of a fusing Carib-Arawak culture which possibly could have developed the basis of a Caribbean civilization.

Before waxing too positive or didactic concerning the present cultural situation, I should utter the usual lament, namely, that we are short of good solid empirical field studies of life as it is actually lived in the region, and that we have to date no systematic attempt to study the culture of the area as a whole. The largest field studies undertaken to date have been the study of Puerto Rican communities by Columbia University and the Puerto Rican government, and the action-oriented team research on the Valley of Marbial made by experts of Unesco and known as the Haitian Pilot Project. Neither of these works has been published. In general the scientific studies of Caribbean customs have tended to focus on the more esoteric aspects—vodun, obideah, superstitions of all sorts, African survivals, and native Indian remnants—rather than upon everyday life.

I might take this opportunity to express the hope that the Caribbean Commission, and the dependency thereof called the Caribbean Research Council, may get to work without delay to study and assay the human resources of the region. The commission, first in the form of a British-United States body, and since 1945 including also France and the Netherlands, has been in operation now for some eight years without having yet gotten around to collecting and organizing systematic scientific material on social behavior and institutions. Basic research is, perhaps, too much to hope for, since the commission was a war-born holding company set up by the rather uneasy colonial powers of the area. A new department of social anthropology at the West Indian University recently founded in Jamaica bids fair to produce reliable data on the British territories, if announced plans are followed out. After a fast start following the war, the department of social anthropology of the University of Puerto Rico seems to have fallen into what I hope is only a temporary decline. And several social anthropologists of the University of Havana, not to mention the grand old man of Cuban social studies, Fernando Ortiz, are working on plans for field studies of modern people of their republic. Thus in the island area itself, not to mention the mainland bordering countries of the Caribbean Sea, talent and "know-how" are developing which should before too long provide accurate material on the cultural and social situation.

As of the present, however, my remarks are necessarily based on such material as is available and passing observations of my own. I personally have visited all the islands except Haiti-Santa Domingo, the Bahamas, Curaçao, and Aruba. (I have visited one Dutch island, Saba.) I have also visited at least parts of all the mainland shore areas except Honduras and Venezuela. But these visits are not to be taken as scientific investigations.

With these qualifications and limitations before us, how does the situation appear culturally and anthropologically? To consider the islands alone, the territory is divided politically between four different colonial powers and three independent republics. Leaving out of account a considerable variety of Creole dialects, four official languages are used: English, Spanish, Dutch, and French. Furthermore, there are several thousand persons, especially in Trinidad and British Guiana, who speak languages of southern

India, mainly Tamil, as their native tongue. Racially, although pure Indians are extinct in the islands, their genetic influence is strong in the large numbers of mestizos, especially in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the mainland shores. The Negro physical type is, however, predominant either in fairly pure form or in mulatto mixtures throughout most of the islands and many of the mainland shore areas. Of course, European whites of both Mediterranean and more northerly strains are found almost everywhere in relatively small numbers, while Hindu white types are common in Trinidad, and Chinese Mongoloids are ubiquitous in cities and towns as small-business men.

Thus to one who travels about, the Caribbean people are a polyglot lot of multicolored hue, who in different places follow a bewildering variety of distinct cultural systems and social institutions. This seems strange, for the modern history of the sea is four hundred and fifty years old, a period of time quite long enough to have produced cultural amalgamation in many another island-studded sea. For example, throughout the islands of Polynesia the basic culture patterns are essentially similar to each other over a stretch of some four million square miles of ocean. And the islands of the Aegean Sea very early achieved a common cultural system. Seas and even oceans have in such cases provided the surfaces over which interisland contacts were made and maintained, and where-by common culture was spread.

For a long time, however, the history of the Caribbean produced a directly contrary result. Hardly had Spain obtained a foothold in the New World Mediterranean than her islands and shore settlements alike became the free game of her rivals, England, France, and Holland. As they in turn founded precarious establishments, they occasionally allied with Spain against each other, and so on. But the raid from the sea, whether in the guise of formal war or as undisguised filibustering, became a regular and expectable part of life in the islands and along the shores of the Caribbean. For over three hundred years the sea was not a glistening road to friendly cultural interchange, but rather a grim source of sudden pillage and often of death. The people learned to turn their backs on the sea and on their neighbors and to receive uninvited visitors and their ways with a marked lack of hospitality. These tendencies were of course stimulated by the colonial policies of all the Euro-

pean powers of the period, which required or encouraged that outside contacts be confined to the mother country exclusively. It is not surprising, therefore, that a certain cultural isolation developed even as between geographically close neighbors. The continuing political divisions existing to the present day have tended to maintain these barriers to free cultural intercourse, plus the anachronistic fact that the Caribbean remains the one region of the Hemisphere where colonies and non-self-governing territories are still formally recognized.

The cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of this American sea is, of course, part of its charm. And there is no *a priori* reason why the Caribbean *should* be made into a cultural unit. However, on the basis of past experience with areas of considerable cultural diversity within a relatively small geographical extent and under conditions of modern transport and communication, it is likely that certain dominant cultural trends will begin to emerge, thus leading to a greater sharing of patterns throughout the region. What kind of predictions or forecasts can we hazard?

The two most pervading cultural systems in the area, from either the point of view of area or that of numbers of people involved, are the Latin American cultural type and what we may call Caribbean African.

The Latin American type of culture dominates the shores of the sea, except for the European Guianas and the Gulf Coast of the United States, and also holds sway as the basic pattern in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo. To be sure, there are local variations, but the culturally controlling institutions and custom patterns in these places can, I think, be easily identified as pertaining to the Latin American type of culture. In some places it has overlaid the Caribbean African which flourishes in isolated areas or in lower class groups, as, for example, in parts of Cuba.

The Caribbean African culture I shall not attempt to analyze, but shall merely suggest that it appears to be a mingling of African and European elements, with some slight admixture of aboriginal Indian, in a characteristic structure. It would seem to be the pervading pattern of Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Trinidad, Coastal British Guiana, and the Honduran coast. Probably the majority of human beings in the Leeward and Windward islands are also controlled by this culture. It will be understood, of

course, that in speaking of this culture as "dominant" in certain areas, I mean that it governs the life space and life activities of the great majority of the human beings living in the places under consideration. From this point of view certain political and economic controls imposed by Europeans would be considered as exterior to the culture of the people. It must also be understood that the use of this concept does not imply, for example, that all Negroes necessarily practice the Caribbean African culture. In Colombia, for example, along the Caribbean coast and also in the Valley of the Cauca, there are thousands of Negroes who, although their skins are black, seem to be culturally modern Latin Americans. Likewise, in suggesting that the Latin American and the Caribbean African cultures are the two strongest trends in the Caribbean area, I am not legislating out of existence many more geographically restricted exhibits of customary life, such as Saba, Aruba, the Bahamas, and Dutch Guiana.

If further research should show this suggestion to be true to the facts, namely, that the Latin American and the Caribbean African cultures between them account for the most important cultural aspects of the Caribbean region, what may happen in the future? Three possibilities may be suggested: (1) Through warlike or other type of conquest from an outside source, both may be destroyed and replaced; for instance, it is conceivable, although unlikely, that, say, a replica of Soviet Russian culture could be imposed by force or persuasion. (2) One or the other of these cultures may take over all the territory at the expense of the other. (3) The two cultures may mutually modify each other and amalgamate in the course of time in such a way as to result in a new civilization which could be described in unhyphenated terms as *the* Caribbean culture. Other things equal, this would certainly be a relatively slow process.

In the meantime, although we cannot think of the Caribbean as a cultural unit now, the divergencies of custom, artifact, and thought patterns within the area, although distinguishable, are not of such an order of difference as to prevent intelligent cooperation among the peoples for their own welfare and that of the rest of the Hemisphere.

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## Lowry Nelson: CUBAN PARADOXES

ALL human societies are characterized by situations which seem self-contradictory; situations in which one might logically expect a certain result from a given set of circumstances, but in which the exact opposite occurs. For example, an examination of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States would lead one logically to expect that a society governed by these instruments would be characterized by racial equality in opportunity and freedom from discrimination. But the result is different from the logical expectation. In a cooperative enterprise organized on the basis of the Rochdale principles, one expects, logically, to find a wide participation of the members in determining the policies of the organization. In some cases this expectation is realized, but in many others it will be found that the organization is dominated by a few individuals. Human behavior is widely characterized by this disparity between the ideal professed and the results achieved; between the nominal and the real; between precept and practice.

These preliminary remarks are made in order to allay any suggestion that may arise in the mind of the reader, as we proceed to discuss some of the paradoxes in the society of Cuba, which is unique in this respect. On the contrary, the characteristics in their kinds, if not in degree, are shared with practically all other societies. I am going to speak of rural Cuba, for that is the life I know best. And because its destiny has always rested and always will rest upon the condition of its agriculture and the people engaged in it, the problems of rural Cuba are the major problems of the country itself. As I hope to show, the problem of the relation of people to the land is not so much a question of the fertility of the



soil as it is a matter of the kind of social structure that rests upon it. It is, in short, a problem in social organization.

The grand paradox of Cuba is the potential fruitfulness of the land and the poverty of people who work upon it. A brief description of Cuban agriculture is necessary background for this discussion. Of the approximately 28 million acres of land in the island, about 22½ million were included in farms, according to the national agricultural census of 1946. About 22 per cent of this acreage was "cultivated," 43 per cent in pasture, 14 per cent in forests, 3 per cent in *marabú* (a tough shrub of little value which spreads by underground root-stocks and is invading large areas of good land), and 18 per cent in "other uses." There were about 160,000 farms with an average size of 140 acres. As usual, the average figure obscures the most important facts regarding distribution of land. Nearly two-fifths of all farms contained less than 25 acres and in the aggregate accounted for a little over 3 per cent of the acreage in farms. At the other extreme, 8 per cent of the farms included 250 acres or more, and contained 70 per cent of the farm land. Seventy per cent of all farms were under 62 acres in size and contained only 11 per cent of the farm land. Farms of 2,500 acres or more constituted only six-tenths of 1 per cent of the total, but contained over a third of land in farms. Thus the concentration of land ownership is far advanced, and is unmistakably one of the

TABLE 1  
NUMBER AND TOTAL AREA OF FARMS BY SIZE IN CUBA, 1946

SIZE OF FARM IN HECTARES	NUMBER OF FARMS		TOTAL AREA IN FARMS	
	Number	Per Cent	Hectares	Per Cent
Total .....	159,958	100.0	9,077,086	100.0
Less than 0.4 .....	1,148	0.7	280	—*
0.5 to 0.9 .....	1,877	1.2	1,399	—*
1.0-4.9 .....	29,170	18.2	84,354	0.9
5.0-9.9 .....	30,305	18.9	210,701	2.3
10.0-24.9 .....	48,778	30.5	725,071	8.0
25.0-49.9 .....	23,901	14.9	789,714	8.7
50.0-74.9 .....	8,157	5.1	488,648	5.4
75.0-99.9 .....	3,853	2.4	329,681	3.6
100.0-499.9 .....	10,433	6.5	2,193,600	24.1
500.0-999.9 .....	1,422	0.9	992,531	10.9
1,000-4,999.9 .....	780	0.5	1,443,500	16.0
5,000 or more .....	114	—*	1,817,602	20.1

Source: National Agricultural Census, 1946, preliminary release.

\* Less than 0.1 per cent.

factors closely related to the impoverished state of many rural Cubans.

Along with the unequal distribution of the available land, there is associated a tenure system which is characterized by a very small proportion of owner operators. The agricultural census of 1946 revealed that about 70 per cent of the farms were operated by non-owners, including six per cent who were managers.

TABLE 2  
NUMBER AND PER CENT OF CUBAN FARMERS IN EACH  
TENURE CLASS, 1946

TENURE CLASSES	NUMBER	PER CENT
Total .....	159,958	100.0
Managers .....	9,342	5.8
Owners .....	48,792	30.5
Renters .....	46,048	28.8
Subrenters .....	6,987	4.4
Sharecroppers .....	33,064	20.6
Squatters .....	13,718	8.6
Others .....	2,007	1.3

*Source:* National Agricultural Census, 1946, preliminary release.

Moreover, the possibility of an operator rising from lower to higher rungs on the agricultural ladder is not promising. The major reason for this is that most of the idle arable land is held by the sugar companies as a reserve on which sugar-cane production could be expanded should the market justify it. This idle land is for the most part the most desirable unused land in the island. In addition, there are large areas of the island being used as cattle ranches which would be put to more intensive use if made available for general farming. Finally, a significant bar to farm ownership on the part of the landless peasantry is the difficulty or impossibility of accumulating sufficient capital to purchase land and equipment. Until and unless the uncultivated land is made available for subdivision into family-size farms and credit facilities are provided, there is little prospect of increasing the proportion of landowning farmers.

The organization of Cuban agriculture is such, therefore, as to make for an extraordinary proportion of the population which is dependent upon wages, either in cash or in kind, and which is, for

the most part, unemployed during a large part of the year. The agricultural census of 1946 reported wage workers in agriculture to the number of 477,000, only 12 per cent of whom were year-around employees. The remainder were employed for an average of only four months during the year, and most of them for three months or less.

Their earnings are pitifully small—from \$100 to \$400—and only because there are two or more workers in a household are they able to eke out a bare existence during the dead season. Some of them supplement their cash earnings with vegetables and fruits grown on land which is made available to them or which they occupy without authorization. The latter group, the *preceristas*, as enumerated among the "farm operators" in the census, numbered nearly 14,000.

It needs to be pointed out that the non-landowners are by no means a homogeneous group. Among them are some sugar *colonos* who are large and well-to-do operators and some moderately well-to-do sharecroppers and renters in other enterprises, notably tobacco. But, in the main, the rural Cuban is a man of low income and often leads a precarious existence.

It is well known that sugar-cane production is the dominant factor in Cuban agriculture. It is a billion dollar industry providing by all odds the major source of employment in the island. Estimates of the number of sugar workers run as high as 500,000. Upwards of three-fourths of the cultivated land is devoted to cane production. As already mentioned, most of this land is owned by the large sugar companies, but some farmers grow cane as a cash crop on their individually owned farms. In 1940, all but 55 of the 174 mills were owned by foreign companies, 67 of them from the United States. Other important commercial agricultural crops are tobacco and coffee.

TABLE 3  
ACREAGE OF PRINCIPAL CROPS HARVESTED IN CUBA, 1945

CROP	ACRES
Sugar Cane .....	2,470,000
Tobacco .....	162,820
Coffee .....	219,524
Rice .....	133,901
Corn .....	602,186*
Beans .....	139,891

TABLE 3 (*Continued*)

Peanuts .....	317,779
Sweet potatoes .....	128,124
Yams .....	16,322
Yuca .....	136,989
Malanga .....	79,317
Potatoes .....	20,671
Bananas .....	199,339†
Calabaza .....	53,535
Tomatoes .....	18,189
Other vegetables .....	8,107
Henequen .....	24,028
Citrus fruits .....	35,956‡
Pineapple .....	28,168
Total cultivated land .....	4,867,197§

Source: National Agricultural Census, 1946, preliminary release.

\* Represents two crops, summer and winter.

† Area planted

‡ In regular plantations. About a third of the citrus trees of the island are dispersed in pastures and cultivated fields.

§ This is not the sum of the acreages listed here, but includes other miscellaneous and minor acreages devoted to crops. Moreover, the acreages of some crops listed here represent two plantings and, therefore, double the actual amount of land devoted to the crops concerned.

When one considers the poverty of this large mass of people on the one hand and the actual and potential productivity of the land on the other, he can come to only one conclusion as to the basic reason for the paradox. It arises not from the paucity of the natural resource, but from the inadequacy of the social arrangements which might make possible its more efficient utilization and a more equitable distribution of the product. While it may be true that on a depleted soil will be found a depleted citizenship, it does not follow that on a rich soil will be found a rich people. You can have rich land and poor people. We in the United States are familiar with this paradox on the rich land of the Upper Mississippi Delta.

Not only is her land base a resource of great potential productivity, but unlike many of her neighbors in the Caribbean, Cuba could scarcely be called overpopulated. I realize that overpopulation is a relative concept, but when Cuba is compared with Haiti, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, the differences are striking. If Cuba had the same population density as Puerto Rico, it would have around 25 million instead of 5 million people. The Dominican Republic also has a low population density when compared with

these three countries. I am not recommending that Cuba aim at achieving the same density of population as Puerto Rico by any means, but it does seem that its present population is not excessive in terms of the resource base if changes can be brought about in resource utilization. Certainly, there should be a possibility of raising the level of living of the present inhabitants far above its present status.

Having presented the paradox of rich land, poor people—one which is all too familiar to this audience—one feels obligated to indicate some of the more obvious remedial measures. The approach to the solution of the problem must consider the two essential aspects: land and people. The aim must be in the long run to increase the productivity of both elements, for only through increased productivity and appropriate distribution of the gains is a higher level of well-being possible.

As far as the land itself is concerned, two things stand out. In the first place, there can be no sound argument against the desirability of utilizing the arable land which is now lying idle within the fence lines of the large estates. In the second place, much of the land now used extensively for pasture could be put to more intensive use for the production of diverse field crops which would add greatly to the food and feed resources of the island.

The main question is what method to use in achieving these desired goals. One possible method is for the government to condemn the land and acquire it directly by payments from the public treasury for resale to potential farmers on credit. This method is not regarded currently as within the financial resources of the government. Another method proposed in a bill introduced in the Cuban Congress in 1948 is to impose a progressive tax on land, the revenues from which would be used to purchase land for distribution among farmers of Cuban citizenship, and to "furnish them with implements, seeds and construction materials." It is not specified whether or not the land and other goods are to be a free grant to the farmer, but the presumption is that they will be.

Another legislative act passed in 1948, entitled a "law regulating contracts of lease of farms and share-crop agreements," compels owners of idle arable or pastoral land to distribute it in small parcels, on either a sharecropping or a long-term lease basis, at nominal rentals and rates, among farm laborers who are required to

utilize it. Article 17, Chapter V, of the law states: "Every owner of tillable land who does not use the same for agricultural purposes or for raising cattle, or who has a larger area than necessary for its adequate development, is obliged to lease it to farmers upon their request, in parcels of not more than five *caballerías*" (approximately 166 acres). Leases for farm lands for planting sugar cane are exempted under this act since they are already regulated by the Sugar Coordination law of 1937.

The law sets the maximum annual rent to be paid by the renter at 6 per cent of the "sales value fixed for the property in the Territorial Registry of the Municipality or in lieu thereof of the price fixed in the last title of ownership of the property."

Without presuming to pass judgment upon the merits of the law in its many details, it must be admitted that its aims are praiseworthy in its provisions for getting idle land into productive use. Naturally, questions have been raised as to the constitutionality of the law, and this matter will take time to test in the courts. Moreover, it applies only to contracts recorded with the Registry of Property and at present not more than 5 per cent are so recorded. One informant reports that the practical effects of the law to date have been "insignificant."

It is clear that there are many problems of implementation to be worked out before the objective of wider distribution of the land is realized. In any case, the policy of subdividing land and distributing it to new operators involves another large set of problems to which attention must be given. "Land reform" by itself is no guarantee that the level of living of farm people will be improved. Unless other measures are taken concurrently to improve the efficiency of the human factor, the level of living may be pressed even lower.

A large-scale vocational training program will be called for, if large numbers of the landless Cubans are to be established as farm operators. Many of them have had little or no experience in farm operation, having spent so much of their lives as wage laborers under supervision. Farm operation today, in any country, requires increasingly greater managerial skill. That Cubans can readily acquire such skill with technical guidance there can be no doubt. The development of the dairy business during the past quarter of a century indicates that Cuban farmers can and will adopt new

practices. The recent expansion of the production of tomatoes for the American market in the north central part of the island is another case in point. But any large-scale increase in numbers of farm operators under the aegis of recent legislation will create a need for an expansion in the technical personnel of the Ministry of Agriculture, both for research and adult educational purposes.

Along with the immediate task of helping the new farm operators get established is the even more pressing need of expanding the educational system for the children of Cuba. It is another tragic paradox of Cuban society that while compulsory education has been "on the books" since the beginning of its life as a nation, a large proportion of the population is illiterate or semi-literate. And this in spite of the fact that about a third of the national budget (1946 figures) was dedicated to education. The excellent constitution of 1940 provided for compulsory education of all "minors of school age" to be provided free by the government. School supplies were to be furnished gratis. It also provided that free "lower secondary instruction and all higher instruction . . . excluding specialized pre-university study" when furnished by the nation, or county, should be gratis. It further provided for a "system of schools for adults devoted particularly to the elimination and prevention of illiteracy," and so on through a long list of laudable educational undertakings.

But the chasm between the professed standards and the actual performance is great indeed. In 1943, the date of the most recent census, there was a child population five to thirteen years of age of 1,008,253, of whom 353,947, or 35 per cent, were reported as attending school by the Ministry of Education. In Oriente, the most rural Province, only one out of five children attended. In urban Havana Province two out of three attended. This was during the regime of a "reform government" elected on a liberal, progressive, platform with most eloquent expressions of its consciousness of the needs of the common people, mainly the rural people.

In the census of occupations, there were 9,500 persons who gave the occupation of teacher. Had all the children of school age been in school there would have been 106 for each teacher. In Oriente Province the ratio would have been one teacher for 200 children! The rural areas have suffered most in this neglect of education.

This is not due to opposition of the farm people. I found many cases in which farm families were employing teachers from their own meager incomes to instruct their children. And the expressions of dissatisfaction with the government on this score were frequent. As one farmer put it: "I have never had any need in my whole life for a policeman, yet I see them often hereabouts; but we do need a school teacher, and one never appears."

It should be no matter of pride to the subsequent governments that in 1931 during the regime of Machado the literacy rate of children under nineteen years of age was higher than it was in 1943. The adult literacy rate was higher in 1943 than in 1931, but this can be credited to the passing into adulthood of the children of 1931 more of whom had had some schooling. A democracy can function only on the basis of a literate population. This is widely accepted in principle, even in Cuba. By the same token, an efficient agriculture based upon family-size farms must rest upon an educated population.

The resolution of the educational paradox is tied up with the general political system of the country. A nation which dedicates a third of its budget to education ought to provide with that amount at least an elementary education for each child of school age. As of 1946 this would have amounted to about \$35 per school child if the five-year-olds are included. If these were eliminated along with those enrolled in private schools, the amount per capita would approach \$50. This figure equals or approaches the per capita expenditures of several of the Southern states of the United States, where school attendance at the elementary level is over 90 per cent. But too little of the money appropriated got beyond the capital city. It is a difficult matter for government dollars to find application at the point for which they are ostensibly intended. Political immorality which has plagued Cuba during and since colonial days lies at the root of this, as of so many other problems. As long as men elected to public office regard government as existing for their own benefit, and as long as so many citizens are kept in a state of total or semi-illiteracy, effective institutions of government are not likely to emerge. To a North American it must always seem another paradox that the Cubans repudiated the only honest president they ever had, the man who announced that he wanted the school teachers to outnumber the



soldiers. Americans know that their own government is subject to political corruption of many kinds, but at least there has not yet been a case in which a president enters the White House a poor man and emerges as a millionaire.

The paradox of poor people on rich land cannot be resolved by legislation alone, nor even by education to go along with it. Cuba has to rise by its bootstraps by processes beyond economics and government action. As I see it, this is in large part a problem of morale. Let me explain. I found a general feeling among the farm people of Cuba that government was something far removed from them. They seemed to feel no responsibility for what happens in Havana. To my knowledge there is not a farmer in the national legislature. When I asked one farmer why he did not aspire to become a representative in Congress, he replied, "I am too honest." The eloquent shrug of his shoulders seemed to shake off any idea of even a remote possibility that a farmer might hold such an important office.

In any democracy, including the United States, it is difficult to get and maintain active citizen participation in the processes of government. The small percentage of eligible voters participating in elections is eloquent evidence of widespread apathy. On the other hand, the fact that voting is made compulsory in Cuba does not appear to work political miracles.

Along with the tendency to evade the responsibilities of citizenship in Cuba there is a strong feeling of reliance upon central government to perform functions which might properly be accomplished by local initiative and self-help. Yet action at the local level to improve roads, schools, and other conditions is almost totally lacking. A local community may complain bitterly that the government does not build or improve its roads, but the inhabitants would not think of taking matters into their own hands and doing something about the situation. In spite of the large amount of unemployment or underemployment throughout the island during certain seasons of the year, this idle labor is seldom utilized for local improvements. There are some exceptions. The dairy-men in the neighborhood of Bayamo assessed themselves to build and maintain an all-weather road reaching out some 60 kilometers into the countryside, including the construction of a bridge across a river. It was clearly a responsibility of the central government to

do this, but when action was not forthcoming from that source, the local people acted on their own initiative. It is also a responsibility of the central government to provide schoolhouses, but in 1943 only about 8 per cent were owned by the government, national and municipal. Two-fifths were furnished rent-free by individuals, and the balance were rented. In one community, Florencia, the local people, under the leadership of the schoolmaster, built a substantial schoolhouse by volunteer contributions of money and labor. But these cases of local initiative are few, and only emphasize the prevailing paralysis of local responsibility and organized effort.

I would emphasize again that legislation for land reform, no matter how grandiose in scope, and well meant in intent and execution, cannot solve the problem of rural Cuba by itself. Such legislation, if wisely conceived, is a most important step, but other reforms should not be neglected. Without a more judicious and statesmanlike administration of education, including the provision of schoolhouses, the increase in teacher personnel, and enforcement of the school attendance laws, the establishment of families on small farms will by no means correct the problem of rural poverty.

Along with improved educational facilities the health of the population must not be neglected. Cuba, I hasten to point out, has made remarkable progress in eliminating or reducing some of the more devastating diseases. Yellow fever has been controlled and malaria largely so. The more common infectious diseases are also well in hand. Moreover, Cuba is a world leader in prepayment medical plans, having had them in operation since the 1880's. That many Cubans do not have sufficient income to belong to such institutions goes without saying. However, there is much praiseworthy work being done by the government in the field of health improvement. Perhaps the greatest single disability of the Cuban population today is the result of almost universal infestation by intestinal and other internal parasites. The relief of the population from this infestation would add greatly to the human energy of the island. One important measure to control infestation of certain types of parasites is the wearing of shoes which many people cannot afford. But sanitation is largely the key to the problem, and the achievement of sanitary measures is largely a question

of changing the habits of the people, which in turn involves education.

Another need of rural people in Cuba is a better diet. Nutrition specialists generally agree that the diet is notably deficient in the so-called protective foods, the green and yellow vegetables. It is over-composed of carbohydrates. One of the food paradoxes is that rice—which the island produces in only a small amount—is one of the most prized foods. The nation has to import about three-fourths of the total amount consumed. Food habits are notoriously difficult to change, but there is abundant evidence that they can be modified over a period of time by a well-planned program of education.

As indicated earlier, one of the most important needs is to develop a sense of local responsibility. This will admittedly be a slow process. People need to get experience in working together in local organizations. Cuba is peculiarly devoid of such organizations in rural areas. Perhaps a good way to begin is through the organization of true cooperatives among local farmers. The emphasis is on the word "*true*." There are many so-called cooperatives in Cuba, but in practically all cases they are nothing more than the ordinary corporation. By true cooperatives we mean those which are founded on the Rochdale principles. Farm organizations could be sponsored for educational purposes, divorced as far as possible from political motivation. Through such experiences it might be possible for farm people to learn to use the mechanisms of local government which already exist for the achievement of desirable ends.

There is good reason to hope for considerable success in such local organizations. In the cities and small towns of Cuba there are the famous Clubs, many of which were originally formed by immigrants from various provinces of the mother country. By and large, these organizations have been remarkably successful and well-managed enterprises. If such administrative skill and social responsibility could be transferred to the area of government, Cuba would be one of the best-managed democracies in the world. If the cities and towns can maintain such effective social entities, there is no reason to suppose the rural people could not do likewise. The problem is to find the appropriate instrumentality for the purpose.

I have been critical of some aspects of Cuban life as I have observed them. If I have not dwelt upon many of the praiseworthy features of the country, it is because of my conviction that it is only through critical appraisal of problems that programs for remedial action can arise. All these critical comments have been made over and over again by thoughtful leaders of the Cuban people. There are many such. Happily, for the country, there exists at the present time a freedom of inquiry and expression which is commendable. And it is to the credit of the people, also, that they have the capacity for self-analysis, which offers much hope for the future.

Cuba's first half-century has seen many constructive achievements. Rising out of the shambles of years of imperial misrule ending in the years of devastating war, totally inexperienced in self-government, it has grown in economic and political strength and made considerable progress in developing its social institutions. With all Cuba's deficiencies in education, health, transportation, and the living standards of great masses of the people, we must recall in fairness that at the turn of the century it had virtually no educational facilities or roads; the population was disabled by many diseases, since brought under control; the cities and countryside devastated by war; and the people incredibly impoverished. Against this background, the Cuba of today affords a favorable contrast.

But the emphasis now must be on the next half-century. Where does the country "go from here"? What are the besetting difficulties that have to be surmounted? What is the "vision of the future"? Many thoughtful Cubans have a vision of the future. They see their rural population better housed, better fed, enjoying a level of life appropriate to a people on so rich a land. They see them enjoying the benefits of education, more wholesome recreational opportunities, and the services of a responsible government sensitive to their needs. And they see a political leadership with moral integrity which uses its powers for the benefit of the people rather than for self-aggrandizement. So long as they can work hopefully for the achievement of such ideals, and so long as such goals are even projected by them, there is room for hope that Cuba's next half-century may be much more glorious than the past.

J. M. Cruxent:\* VENEZUELA: A STRATEGIC  
CENTER FOR CARIBBEAN ARCHEOLOGY

(Translated by Irving Rouse)

IT IS well known that, surrounding the great classic centers of prehistoric American civilization in Mexico and Peru, there are other centers which, although less important, pose some baffling problems. The advanced state of gold-working among certain Colombian peoples, the statues of San Agustín in the same country, the magnificent pottery of Coclé in Panama, as well as that of Barrancas in Venezuela, and many other examples which might be cited, place before us problems which we may hope someday to resolve but which we have only just recognized. They give us glimpses of unknown worlds, which are as yet very little studied.

A number of the secondary centers lie within the political and natural limits of Venezuela. Our own recent studies, as well as those of other investigators, such as Oramas (1917),† Tulio Febres Cordero (1920), Jahn (1927), Rafael Requena (1932), Bennett (1937), Antolínez (1940), Osgood (1943), Howard (1943), A. V. Kidder II (1944), Dupouy (and Cruxent, 1947), and Antonio Requena (1947) have revealed the existence in Venezuela of a whole series of archeological complexes, the cultural and historical value of which we were far from imagining thirty years ago. (We use the term "historical" in its broadest sense, including what might better be called "prehistoric.") To-

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† See the list of references at the end of this paper.

day, for example, we are on the verge of demonstrating that certain Venezuelan cultures, which are surprisingly well advanced, date from the beginning of the Christian Era.

Be that as it may, the last few years have opened enormous fields of research and have provided us with hitherto unsuspected problems. In the Museum of Natural History of Venezuela we are currently undertaking studies of plant and animal migrations in general, as well as research in human migrations and diffusion of culture by other means. I am particularly concerned with the latter, since it is my specialty.

Dr. Osgood provided an excellent graphic picture of the strategic position of Venezuela when he stated that "it lies like the connecting bar of an *H* between main migration routes along the eastern part of South America and out through the Antilles" (Osgood and Howard, 1943:5). We may add that Venezuela occupies this position not only with respect to human prehistory but also with reference to the broad outlines of animal and vegetable distribution. We must point out, however, that the resemblance is no more than an analogy, for the chronology of animal and vegetable dispersion is not the same as that of the spread of human groups, since all the latter has taken place during a period of time which, in terms of the history of the earth, can only be considered the lapse of a few minutes.

What we do know for certain is that Venezuela was influenced, and perhaps in certain periods dominated, by migratory and cultural currents proceeding from different directions. It has always been suspected, but can only now be demonstrated, that peoples have arrived in the country from very different sources and during very different periods, coming from the south, the west, and the east; and, it is necessary to add, also from the north, that is to say, from the *Mar de las Antillas*, or the Caribbean Sea of our English-speaking friends; for this sea has played a very active part in the migrations.

We must confess that, while Osgood's comparison of Venezuela with the cross-bar of the letter *H* is very just, it does not say all that we need to know in order to understand the geographical significance of the country. We would add that the bar of the *H* must not be considered just a single line traversed from right to left or vice versa, but rather a series of lines (that is, routes of

migration or other kinds of diffusion) over which human beings and elements of culture have proceeded in various directions.

In Venezuela we still lack, as in many other parts of South America, good stratigraphy which will establish an adequate chronology, even of some of our principal prehistoric cultures. Nevertheless, I can state that, thanks to the magnificent systematic investigations of Drs. Bennett, Osgood, Howard, Rouse, Dupouy, and Requena, as well as the more modest work of the speaker, we can now coordinate a series of studies so as to establish a tentative general chronology for Venezuela, based upon stratigraphy and the comparison of cultural complexes. We are indebted to Howard (1947) and Rouse (1947) for the first draft of this chronology, to which I shall refer in connection with the following remarks, with the understanding that the conclusions based upon it are subject to certain alterations as our own work, now in the course of active prosecution within the boundaries of Venezuela, advances towards the stage of factual publication.

Howard and Rouse assume the existence of four major periods. The first of these, which is preceramic, and the second, characterized by painted pottery with negative designs, are still too poorly known for us to draw conclusions concerning migrations and cultural diffusion. With respect to the third and fourth periods, however, we are on firmer grounds, and it is with these periods that I shall deal.

For some time it has been recognized that there exists in Venezuela a culture called "Los Barrancos" (Osgood and Howard, 1943:95-110) or, more commonly, "Barrancas," after the name of a town on the edge of the Orinoco Delta, near the mouth of that river. The pottery of this culture may be considered classic, both in technology and in style. We are convinced—and all who are acquainted with this culture and have been able to judge its products by examining specimens or the published descriptions (for example, Osgood, Howard, and Rouse)—appear to agree that the Barrancas pottery attains a high degree of technical and artistic excellence. Those who used to believe that the region of the lower Orinoco was always inhabited by savages are therefore completely mistaken, for in this case the archeology demonstrates the reverse.

This past summer, I had the honor to work on the Barrancas

culture with my friend and colleague, Dr. Irving Rouse, of Yale University. We excavated, one might almost say exhaustively, the site of Saladero near Barrancas and obtained important information concerning the chronology of this site, which had a depth of some two meters, with refuse extending from the surface to the bottoms of our trenches. I cannot yet present the results of this work, on which I hope to report jointly with Dr. Rouse, once we have examined with greatest precision the material which is now in the laboratory. I can only anticipate that we apparently are dealing with more than one culture and with several periods of occupation. We hope to determine the ages of the cultures by means of Carbon 14 analysis. Any dates which we might suggest today would lack a firm basis in fact, and hence would be simply a personal opinion, which might suffer radical changes as a result of our future work.

Nevertheless, it may not be too much to say that the site of Saladero was apparently inhabited during all three of the ceramic periods in Venezuela and that the classic Barrancas pottery dates from the second of these, that is, from the third of the four general periods established by Howard and Rouse. Thus, the spread of Barrancas-like, or "Barrancoid" ceramics, as I shall call it, probably took place during Period III.

Some of the motives of Barrancoid art are found in the Antilles in a stage of development which corresponds to that of Barrancas, judging from the few pieces I have examined with any care. The La Cabrera cultural phase of the Lake Valencia region in central Venezuela also seems to be Barrancoid. Some Barrancoid motives, although more profoundly modified by local cultural developments, may also be recognized in Amazonia and, less securely, in the Andes of Ecuador and Peru (for example, Palamatory, 1950:346).

In pointing out these resemblances, we are not presenting anything new; they have, for example, recently been well discussed by Willey (1949: 195-6). For our part, we believe that they are the result of a single cultural movement. Whether this consisted of a migration or of diffusion of cultural traits, we hesitate to say, but it seems to us quite possible that the various Barrancoid cultures, along with many others, may have originated in the northern part of the Peruvian highlands, whence the sources of the Amazon could have served as an excellent route for people carrying the



nucleus of a common civilization to descend in the remote epochs of pre-Colombian history.

We do not pretend to offer, with these observations, a definite theory concerning possible human migrations in South America. Instead, we limit ourselves to stating that some evidence of cultural connection exists between the Peruvian highlands and cultures of Brazil, Venezuela, and the Antilles at a time which may possibly be contemporaneous with that which current chronological studies assign to the civilization of Chavin in Peru (for example, Bennett and Bird, 1949: 112).

It seems possible to us that the Venezuelan cultures may have been connected to some classic center in Peru by one or more of the following routes. (*a*) descent of the Amazon, followed by movement up the Río Negro and down the Orinoco; (*b*) more directly, from northern Peru through Ecuador and Colombia, so as to enter Venezuela from the west; and (*c*) descent of the Amazon to its mouth and then movement north along the coast to eastern Venezuela. The first two of these appear the more probable, and therefore it is possible that there was a "dualism" of origins, with route (*a*) leading to Barrancas and route (*b*) to La Cabrera, since each of these cultures presents us with some characteristics which recall the old Andean cultures.

To recapitulate, we have not presented a new theory but instead only a working hypothesis. Noting the existence in Venezuela of the two rather old cultural centers at Barrancas and La Cabrera, which may possibly date back as far as a millenium before the discovery of America, we have suggested that these may possibly be derived from one of the classic pre-Incaic cultures of Peru. As we have indicated, this culture may have reached Venezuela by way of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, and perhaps also directly from south to north along the line of human migration and cultural diffusion which extends from the Peruvian highlands through the lowlands of the Napo drainage in Ecuador and the eastern part of Colombia into Venezuela. This cultural current seems to have extended, in addition, northward across the chain of Antillean islands, moving slowly and suffering notable transformations in the process.

In the course of our studies of the prehistoric archeology of Venezuela, we have also been able to recognize the probable

existence of a second cultural movement, not quite so old as the one just discussed, which seems to have had its origin in the Amazon basin and to have passed from south to north in the same direction as the previous migration. This second diffusion was responsible for the ceramic material which we know today as "Valencia Red" (Kidder, 1944: 61-71), and for this reason we shall call it "Valencian."

It seems probable to us that the Valencian pottery had its origin in a cultural center developing out of the previous Barrancoid horizon, perhaps at the close of Howard and Rouse's Period III, but it is much impoverished from the artistic point of view and, as a result, differs markedly from the types which had previously diffused from the Andean highlands and from their various ramifications. The artistic motives of the Valencian ceramic complex cannot be derived from those of the previous horizon for, according to the most recent research, there was a marked regression in art and very probably also in culture.

The ethnic and linguistic problems raised by this second migration are delicate and poorly understood. It does not seem impossible to us that the authors of this second invasion were Arawak. Once more, however, we must emphasize the hypothetical nature of our conclusions, which is due to the scarcity of stratigraphical studies, a condition which unfortunately holds true for the greater part of Central and South America outside the Mexican and Andean centers.

During the course of statistical studies which we have undertaken in preparation for writing a book on Venezuelan archeology—a work which we hope to terminate in the near future—we have encountered something which at first surprised us greatly, namely the existence in Venezuela of painted, multiplelegged pottery which appears to be Panamanian in inspiration and alien to the local ceramics we have previously discussed under the names "Barrancoid" and "Valencian." This third ceramic tradition, which we shall call "Isthmian," seems to have made its appearance in Venezuela only shortly before the discovery of America, that is, during Period IV of the Howard-Rouse chronology.

While we do not yet have a sufficiently complete stratigraphy of the Isthmian tradition, we may note the following: (a) The pottery in question belongs in general on a high cultural level. This

signifies the arrival of conquering and colonizing groups from Central America, which clashed with the cultural groups already established in Venezuela and tended to replace the latter. (b) The geographical distribution of this painted (monochrome or polychrome), multilegged pottery, as we know it today, suggests that we are dealing with the protohistoric and historic periods, that is, from approximately A. D. 1300 to 1500 or 1700.

It strikes us as more than a coincidence that the date we have estimated for this ceramic tradition in Venezuela is approximately the same as that which Lothrop (1942: 1944) has established on the basis of his work at Sitio Conte in the province of Coclé, Panama, where the pottery is somewhat similar. It is also highly interesting to note that these sites correspond not only in chronology and typology but also in geographical distribution with the Indian groups poorly termed "Carib" by the chroniclers.

We omit from this account various other possible migrations and lines of diffusion which we are now in the process of tracing. Some of these may be much older than the three described, but we have so little information about them at present that we cannot discuss them here.

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*Part V*

*POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL  
PROBLEMS OF THE  
CARIBBEAN AREA*



Silvio Zavala: THE CONTACT OF CULTURES IN  
THE HISTORY OF MEXICO

(Translated by P. Villa Fernández)

I

THE discovery of the New World brought to an end one of the most spectacular separations between inhabited parts of the globe in recorded history. Simultaneously with this began the association of Europeans and Indians, leading to an important phase in the history of Latin America.

The period before the discovery is no less attractive as the object of our study than the period of union of the Old and the New World which followed the arrival of Columbus. Chronologically, the former is much longer than the latter. Calculations made concerning the antiquity of man in America fluctuate between twenty and twenty-five thousand years; that is to say, about two hundred centuries after the first Asiatic immigrants passed through what we know today as Bering Strait.

In the face of this immense separation, what do the four fast-moving centuries represent during which the lands of America were opened to the initiative of the late-arriving European, African, Asiatic, and Oceanian immigrants who came in the wake of the ships of Columbus?

It seems as if Destiny had wished to shape the outline of this history by means of one of the greatest bifurcations that had ever taken place or that could possibly be imagined in human experience, to be followed by a violent and rapid process of amalgamation which, even in our time, we can label as recent, incomplete, and arduous.

But what is important in this brief outline of the history of the American world is not only the unequal chronological pattern to which we have just referred, but also the cultural content of the periods preceding and following the Columbian discovery.

While that protracted separation lasted, in the New World and in Europe the problems that arose in the cultural and natural life of the towns that remained thus separated for millenniums were gradually solved. This is the original aspect of the conditions to which we refer. Man exerted himself and made progress on each continent in complete ignorance of what was unfolding on the other side of the ocean. For this reason also, at the time of establishing contact the exchange of cultural values between the two peoples attained an unexpected proportion and speed. For instance: through the Indians, the Europeans were introduced to and learned to utilize corn, beans, cocoa, peanuts, tomatoes, chile, potatoes, tobacco, chicle, turkeys, rubber, llamas, and Indians; on their part, the Europeans introduced to the Indians wheat, rice, barley, sugar, horses, oxen, the plow, the alphabet, and gunpowder.

These are examples of an enumeration which, to be complete, would oblige us to make a logical review of the history and the state of culture which the Europeans and Indians respectively had attained during the long centuries of separation.

This competition of cultural elements has given birth to an interminable polemic between Indophiles and Hispanophiles, owing to the fact that it is possible to show the wealth of contributions of one of the two cultures while ignoring the contributions of the other, or to compare their respective contributions by showing that those of one culture detract from or belittle those of the other.

However, P. Rivet expresses the philosophy resulting from the contact of cultures in a more harmonious manner. "Every man should understand and know that in every latitude, in every longitude, other human beings, his brothers, whatever the color of their skin, or regardless of whether their hair is straight or kinky, have contributed towards making life easier and more agreeable."

In this contact of cultures brought about by the discovery of America, we find fraternal exchange of work, invention, and human attainments as well as other less-happy aspects that are linked with the unleashing of conquests, sicknesses, spoils, oppression, and destruction.



Each culture has a good and an evil aspect, and the interchange embraces one as much as it does the other. The philosophical historians of the eighteenth century could see this clearly. They even tried to establish an analytical balance of the advantages over the disadvantages. Certainly it is undeniable that syphilis and small-pox are as communicable as the art of building arches or preparing chocolate.

Taking these facts into consideration, we will attempt to explore the significance of some aspects of the history of Mexico in respect to the contact of cultures.

## II

Naturally, the intensity of the contact depends on the strength and development of the people concerned. The history of the European colonists who came to lands that were uninhabited or only sparsely populated, and had primitive cultures, differs from the history of those who came in contact with larger groups of Indians of more advanced culture. It is due to this circumstance that profound differences existed between the colonization of the sparsely settled territory of present-day United States or that of the *pampa* of the Río Plata and the occupation of the well-populated lands of Mexico and Peru.

It is a well-known fact also that among the Spanish and Portuguese colonists in the Antilles and in Brazil, lasting miscegenation with the Indians did not take place. This was because, after crushing the weak groups that were first encountered, the colonists had recourse to the hand labor of African Negroes, thus creating very distinct societies, ethnically and culturally, from those of Indo-America.

Therefore, the native population, sometimes by its very absence, scarcity, or weakness, and at other times by its presence in considerable numbers, is a factor in determining the composition of the new society that evolved from contact with the white men. This is also a factor in unifying the phenomenon of cultural interchange.

The most interesting and the richest examples of fusion are those in which the importance and the heterogeneity of the integral elements are greatest. That is to say, when there is a true co-existence of cultures, a give and take of values between them occurs, some-

times creating an important mestizo population, sometimes performing exchanges in invention and the comparison of experiences.

From this point of view, Mexico constitutes a fortunate example. Groups of sedentary Indians had congregated in the valleys of Mexico's high plateau for economic, climatic, and cultural reasons, and, in the period from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries of the Christian era especially, had developed complex and interesting ways of life.

It cannot be said that there was a uniformity of culture among the diverse indigenous settlements of Mexico. Thus, the fact that it may be possible to recognize, in general terms, certain traits of affinity among the groups that we classify as "Indians" does not imply that there are not considerable differences among them, not only in the narrow field of anthropology but also in their material life, customs, language, political organization, religion, and other cultural manifestations. No one could assert that all these groups lived in the same "historic time," inasmuch as the experiences of the past that their respective civilization and historic conscience allowed them to accumulate were dissimilar in each case.

In the north of Mexico, for example, there were nomadic tribes, such as the Chichimecas, who lived by the gathering of fruit or by hunting. By contrast, in the center of the country, forms of sedentary life based on agriculture had evolved.

The archeologist today is able to point out the cultural variety in the groups from the ceramics, the differences and the relationships in the architecture, the antiquity or the newness of the strata, and the greater or lesser development of each group.

In short, the pre-Hispanic panorama offers a vast field for the study of the variety and reciprocal influences among the Indian cultures.

The temper of the relations among these various cultures changed in accordance with circumstances. There were outbreaks, defense of frontiers, wars, alliances, periodic hostilities to capture prisoners destined for sacrifices, treaty agreements, slavery, tributary subjection, acceptance of strange gods, exchange of women, and imitation of the arts and crafts.

Such mutual influences and conflicts among the various groups gave to each its own history, and this history is different for each

group, depending on whether it is the Tenochcas, Tlatelolcas, Texcocanos, Tlaxcaltecas, Huejotzingas, or others.

Moreover, these group differences were to be reflected later in the temper of the contact with the European conquerors and colonizers. For example, with nomadic groups of the north, there could not be the same type of relationship that was obtained with the sedentary groups of the central plateau. In one case, the Spanish armies encountered a swift, fugitive enemy whom it was impossible to engage in a formal battle. For this reason, the hostilities were prolonged and colonization was difficult and arduous. In another case, a decisive triumph could be expected on the field of battle followed by a process of manorial domination such as occurred in the major conquests of Mexico and Peru, which culminated in the social system of *encomiendas*.

In these latter cases, the well-disciplined Indian armies fought as allies of the Spanish army, having joined them either without previous opposition or after having opposed them without success. This is what occurred in the case of the Tlaxcaltecas and the Mexicans; and we can see the military custom and prowess of some pre-Columbian peoples surviving after the end of their autonomous existence.

Perhaps the group that suffered most from the arrival of the Europeans was the priesthood. The change from the indigenous polytheistic religion to the monotheistic Christian religion left it with neither public office nor recognition. The priests did not yield easily and without a struggle. Idolatry existed and tried to survive within the framework of the Christian society. But, because his prestige and functions had slipped from his grasp as a result of the Conquest, this could not be a sufficient recompense for the former pagan priest.

In the political order, the great chiefs, Moctezuma, Cuauhtemoc, and Atahualpa, lost their lives when they lost their empires. But the indigenous nobility pursued a varied fortune. Some Indians of the upper classes intermarried with the Spaniards of the conquest, including Doña Marina, and Doña Isabel, daughter of Moctezuma. Some of the Indian chiefs retained, in a way, their authority and their lands. True, they suffered spoliation and authoritative intervention from the Spanish. On the other hand, they took possession of lands dedicated before to the chief, or to religion, or which be-

longed to the Indian communities or to the tax collectors. It was not unusual, either, to see a former Indian chief raising goats or pigs, that is, taking advantage of the European innovations to bolster his economic status. We have other evidence of Indians of the nobility completely humbled, working hoe in hand, with the common Indians. Caciquism, as an institution, was not destroyed by the Spaniards. They attempted to use the *cacique* as an instrument for their own ends, giving him authority over the indigenous people and possessions. At times this intermediate function was used successfully by a chief in order to survive and prosper in the face of threats to his authority and well-being inherent in the enormous political change represented by European domination. On the other hand, there were Indians not of the nobility who, in spite of the protests of the former chiefs, were elevated to the governorship of towns because of the changes introduced by the Spanish colonization.

The economic life of the Indian groups contributed considerably to determining the type of relationship that was established with the Europeans. Thus we see that the Indians of Michoacán, who were metal workers, emigrated with the Spanish colonists to the mines of Zacatecas, while the agriculturists of Tlaxcala aided in the settling of the environs of Saltillo. The agricultural yield attained by the indigenous pre-Hispanic peoples was an important factor in the nutrition of the Europeans while they were colonizing and establishing themselves. Afterwards, the forced hand labor of the Indian supported the work in the fields. The Indians paid tribute in money or in kind to the commissioners of the Crown. The workers who were legally free but restricted in their movements because of advance payments and debts gradually populated the haciendas that the European colonists established between, beyond, or next to the holdings of the indigenous towns.

The Indian artisans, skillful in handwork which could be adjusted to the new forms of social life, made a great effort to adapt their tools, their economic habits, and even their artistic conceptions to the new demands created by the colonization; but this did not cause them to be less competent workers than before. Notwithstanding the rivalry that existed on occasion between them and the European artisans and the attempts to deny them admittance to the best guilds, they succeeded in maintaining themselves in

their work in imprinting, even in the most magnificent churches erected by the invading culture, the stamp of their handiwork and the touch of their sensibility.

Thus, in spite of the strength and cultural prestige inherent in the Europeans that invaded the lands inhabited by highly cultured American Indians, these cultures did not disappear. Demographically, some few thousands of Europeans could not erase the presence of more than two million Indians. In the realm of religion, the army, politics, economics, and arts, there occurred, indisputably, a great alteration. But, with or without the knowledge or consent of the conquerors, the pre-Columbian forms of culture tried to survive and, in a certain measure, succeeded.

The language is one example of this survival. The Indians of Mexico still speak Nahuatl, Otomi, Tarasco, Maya, and other native tongues, learning Castilian slowly and as a second language. Spanish predominates only in cities inhabited by Europeans or their descendants and the zones increasing in mestizo population, where the native tongues are being disregarded or forgotten.

A similar occurrence is noted in regard to the alteration or preservation of dress, customs, popular arts—in short, of everything concerning folklore. These are usually threatened when there is a contact of cultures, but they are also enriched by foreign influences. Examples are the *Dance of the Moors and Christians*, which has become a part of Mexican folklore; preference for the gaudy cowboy dress; and customs concerning horses and bulls, which have become typical characteristics of the new society.

The process of fusion did not occur in the same manner, nor with the same intensity, nor at the same time throughout the country or in the various social strata. At a given moment, analysis reveals quite different results, depending on whether it deals with the capital of a province, a remote or a nearby town, or a tribe, as Redfield has shown in the case of Yucatán. This is so because the whole country did not have the same pattern of culture. It is a society that in its make-up presents considerable gradations and internal inequalities. These are not always due to economic reasons. For example, there are people who go barefooted and do not sleep in beds, not because they lack the resources to obtain shoes and beds but because their cultural traditions permit them to dispense with them without hardship. From the peculiar formation

of a given town the historical influence is perceptible, showing startling contrasts of primitiveness and modernity that astonish even the most unobservant traveler in Mexico.

The number of Indians in Mexico and the type and deep roots of their pre-Columbian cultural traditions easily explain the reason for the survivals that we have pointed out, as well as the manner in which the resistance, fusion, or disappearance of the indigenous cultures have taken place in the face of the importation of European culture.

In studying the process through the years and comparing the successive results, it is seen that the ethnic and cultural amalgamation continues to gain ground century after century. The Indian physiognomy of Mexico in the eighteenth century was less pronounced than in the sixteenth. Since then, the elements of modern culture, such as easier means of communication, greater activity of economic processes, schools, and medicines have made progress over the traditions and indigenous survivals, notwithstanding setbacks in the interior of the country.

In spite of outbursts of Indianist propaganda, the Mexican state, with the aid of such capital factors as the "national language," continues to be an important agent in the march towards unification. The Western alphabet has been adopted, and picture writing is no longer found in indigenous manuscripts. Mention may be made with some degree of correctness of indigenous religious survivals. However, churches of Western design are built in place of pyramids, and the priests of the old religion no longer perform publicly, nor do they have human sacrifices. Now, the Indian tends to travel on horseback, on muleback, along the highways, by train, and by automobile; but Indians on foot carrying burdens on their backs may still be seen along the roads. As soon as increased wages permitted, they discovered the buses, converting them into chicken coops and receptacles for their baskets, and making of them a jumble of vegetables, imparting to the bus a primitive flavor.

Next to bare feet will be seen a pair of shoes denoting the wearer's approach to an acceptance of mestizo culture, which day by day is becoming more natural and less onerous.

In this way, on a base that preserves the racial and cultural

traits that characterized the people before the discovery, are imprinted the continual and increasing changes resulting from inevitable contact with the world of European origin.

### III

The Spaniard of the Conquest was not lacking in background, insofar as cultural contacts were concerned. His historical tradition was complex, and had received successive contributions from Iberians, Celts, Tartars, Mycenaeans, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, and Arabs. In his own peninsula, in the neighboring islands, and on the coasts of Africa, he had lived with Moors, Jews, Canary Islanders, and Africans. He had waged war with these people; had experienced the opposition and, at times, the co-existence of religions; had engaged in plunder and suffered pillage, the abduction of women, and the enslaving of men. With regard to thought, the professions, and the arts, he had assimilated, at the same time, the influence of Western tradition and the Arabic civilization.

In the various tasks of colonization which followed the first stages of the Conquest, Europeans and Indians were inevitably associated in the building of cities, churches, and palaces; in the working of minerals; in the cultivation of the fields and the raising of cattle; in sordid labor, in the workshops of the artisans, in the inns and behind the droves of beasts of burden along the highways; in the unloading of ships; that is to say, in the multiple manifestations of economic life in which the hand of indigenous labor is joined under the direction of the colonizing group and made to serve its interest. For everything is not summed up in the soldier of the Conquest. Settlers, missionaries, public officials, merchants, artisans, lawyers, teachers, miners, architects, and artists also were among those who came to the New World. All these types of men and their respective activities helped to give a broader and more diversified character to society and to create other types of relationships. This immigration to the colonies was not the work of a moment only, but was maintained and varied through three centuries.

These contacts created new social classes within the structure derived from the Conquest. The lowly European often ascended

to manorial planes and riches. The Indian noble could easily fall from his previous state or preserve it only with certain modifications. The Creoles, descendants of Europeans born in America, drew apart and opposed those coming from Spain and Portugal. In the beginning there were Indian slaves, in conformity with the tradition of European law. Other half-free workers completed the motley social picture.

The history of the Hispano-indigenous relations is intimately connected with possession of the land, the waters, the minerals—in short, with the natural elements of a rich country. Sometimes there occurred simply a spoliation or displacement of the indigenous possessions; at other times, an extension of exploitations active since pre-Hispanic times. And at still other times, man and European techniques succeeded in opening new areas of wealth where the indigenous culture had not operated—great plains in the north supporting cattle; mining centers created in the open air, as that of Zacatecas; a port established in relation to the commerce of Europe, as in Veracruz.

Manifest regional differences between the urban and rural nuclei, the ports and the interior, the mining zones, the farmers or cattlemen, and the sugar mills become perceptible.

In the beginning, the wars of conquest, the spreading out of the missions, and the exploitation of the resources brought the Europeans and the natives together. But these contacts were not always accomplished in a peaceful manner, for contact alone does not signify the beginning of harmonious living. The sudden union of contrary elements can easily produce pain, enmity, and the oppression of some classes by others.

The colonial life established by the Spaniards in the midst of the Indians was not lacking in such aspects of opposition. This was to be expected as such colonial life was initiated by conquest and social domination. Even within the hierarchical scheme of the state and society, the races were legally separated one from the other. There were free men, or semi-free men; taxpayers and those exempt; those with and those without legal rights; those with or without access to civilian or religious offices; and those invested with or deprived of a considerable number of prerogatives. Distinct and different laws existed for each group in the population: Spanish, Creoles, mestizos, Indians, Negroes, and other castes.



However, within this aggregate of circumstances that seemed to make of the great contact of the European and Indian cultures a seedbed of dissensions, some profound factors of amalgamation are perceived. These consist of certain Christian ideas which were introduced by the Spaniard; the racial structure of the amalgamation; and the fusion and exchange of cultural values which, through their intrinsic goodness, were susceptible of mutual utilization on the part of the conquerors and the conquered.

Largely because of these factors, Mexico today is unfolding before our eyes as a well-integrated mestizo country.

# 14



## J. Lloyd Mechem: AN APPRAISAL OF THE REVOLUTION IN MEXICO

MEXICO at mid-century looks back on the preceding four decades as one of the most significant epochs in its long history. It was a period of fundamental political, social, and economic transformations; hence the term "Revolution," customarily spelled with a capital R. Since the overthrow of the Díaz dictatorship in 1910, and particularly after the adoption of the radical and controversial Constitution of 1917, the governments in Mexico have been called "revolutionary"; their programs in their various aspects—educational, agrarian, labor, religious, industrial, social, anti-foreign—have all been called "revolutionary" programs; and even the official political party, which has arrogated to itself the position of special and exclusive interpreter and protagonist of the principles underlying this national upheaval, is called the "revolutionary" party.

The Mexico of 1950 is the end product of a revolutionary era. Although we reject the contention of some that the Revolution has run its course and is now at an end, it is nevertheless true that the present Mexican administration, while not abandoning the principal objectives of the Revolution, has radically altered its approach to those ends. A new, and as yet indeterminate, phase is being inaugurated; to what extent it will reflect the ideology forged by the white heat of the socio-economic conflict of 1910-1920 remains to be seen.

Thus, whatever the future may hold for the further development of Mexico's revolutionary program, it seems that the present is a

logical time to pause and take stock; to draw up a balance sheet of the gains and failures which have accrued from a civil strife as bitter and destructive as any of the modern era. Our problem can be simply stated: To what extent have the objectives of the Revolution been implemented to date? An answer to this question must first wait on a definition and analysis of the revolutionary program itself.

### *I. Origins of the Revolutionary Program*

Although the Mexican Revolution is generally dated from 1910, it was not until several years later that a revolutionary program began to take shape. The initial movement inspired by Francisco I. Madero, which accomplished the overthrow of the Díaz regime, was purely political, and not unlike many similar insurrections in earlier Mexican history. It was Madero's belief, stated in his *Plan de San Luis Potosí*, that Mexico's ills could be cured by the political remedies "effective suffrage and no re-election." "It was not his purpose to set a new world aglow or to tear the old order apart. His mission, as he saw it, was a limited one: to re-establish the older system of political succession by regular election."<sup>1</sup> To illustrate Madero's unawareness of the real problems of Mexico, social and economic, it is said that, when asked by a heckler why he did not divide his wealth with the poor people, if he was so concerned about their welfare, he replied: "The people do not ask for bread, they ask for liberty."<sup>2</sup> Of course liberty without bread is both absurd and impossible.

Madero thought that within the law and under universal respect for the established government he could peacefully devote himself to work for the good of the people. However, because of his weakness and vacillation, constituted authority dissolved and chaos swept over the Mexican nation. His assassination ended the first phase of the Revolution, which has been called by Luis Cabrera "the Prodrôme," or precursor of the Revolution.

The usurper, Victoriano Huerta, whose hands were stained with

<sup>1</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, *Mexico, The Struggle for Peace and Bread* (New York, 1950), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Jesús Silva Herzog, *La revolución mexicana en crisis* (Mexico, 1944), p. 10.

the blood of Francisco Madero, represented a return to power of the old adherents of the Díaz regime, and thus it was a reaction, but not necessarily a counter-revolutionary reaction, for as yet there was no revolution. The struggle for the possession of office, and the perquisites that went with it, was an old and frequently repeated story of Mexican military-political life.

Even the entry of Venustiano Carranza into the field, at the head of the "Constitutionalist" forces, did not immediately alter the character of the Civil War. Carranza's *Plan de Guadalupe*, like Madero's *Plan de San Luis*, was purely political. He called for the overthrow of Huerta, a new election, and adherence to the old Constitution of 1857. In the end Carranza triumphed, but in order to triumph he had to promise a series of social and economic reforms of a radical nature. That is, he had to move a bit to the left, more because of the exigencies of war than because of revolutionary convictions.

The fighting phase of the Revolution extended from 1913 to 1916. This was a period marked by military campaigns and counter-campaigns, the capture and loss of Mexico City and other populous centers times without number, rapine and murderous conduct, general disorder and insecurity. Mexicans became regarded abroad as a people incorrigibly prone to disorder and war, and Mexico itself became a synonym for "national chaos." However, in the course of this seemingly aimless bloodletting and wanton destruction, there gradually evolved what might be called the "ideology of the Revolution."

The socio-economic aims of the Revolution, nebulous at first, were not born in the minds of the revolutionary chiefs, or the intellectuals, but in the pain and desperation and deprivation of the masses who were attracted by vague hopes of material gain. It was because he described so well the meaning of this early phase of the Revolution to the groping lowly and humble, to whom it "was a release from enforced humility, a rifle placed in the hand, a chance to plunder the plunderers," that Mariano Azuela's *Los de Abajo* (1916) has been acclaimed the greatest novel of the Revolution.

Eventually the bewildering conglomerate of violent events in Mexico began to weave a pattern which revealed the struggle as an uprising of the poor and the numerous against the few and the

rich. Since the *hacendados*, the bankers, the rich merchants, the foreigners, and clergy were the defenders of *Porfirismo* and *Huertismo*, the inevitable result was that the revolutionaries directed their attack against them, and thus the war acquired the character of a class struggle. Without conscious direction from above, without intellectual leadership, without source except from the grass-roots of Mexico itself, there emerged, in the midst of the national disorder, a social revolution.

"Hunger for lands, hunger for bread, and hunger for justice," declares a distinguished Mexican intellectual, "were the three causes which motivated the revolutionary movement."<sup>3</sup> Since the wealth of the country was in agriculture, the movement was first turned against the great landlords. In those early days of the Revolution agrarian reform was understood as a simple formula of dividing the landed wealth of the privileged few among the masses. Of course there were later attempts to justify the agrarian reform by various reasons—juridical, economic, and even technical—but the real reason was simply "patent social injustice"—the injustice of the masses remaining landless and virtual serfs on the numberless estates of boundless extent. Truly, the earliest and most basic objective of the Revolution was that expressed by the slogan: "Land for the dispossessed of Mexico."

However influential a factor was the hunger for land, the stirring of the masses signified something more fundamental, a straining at bonds which chained Mexico to a past best characterized as feudalistic. Mexicans seemed to sense the opportune occasion to recast the social order, to throw off anachronistic institutions, which condemned the nation to a position centuries behind the modern march of progress.

Although Carranza was no social revolutionist, as proved by his *Plan de Guadalupe*, he was nevertheless an astute politician, and thus quick to detect the meaning of the undercurrent gaining momentum among the inarticulate masses. Therefore, for opportunistic reasons, to stave off military defeat, he put himself at the head of the reform and thus became a social revolutionary. It was at this stage that the insurrection became unmistakably a Revolution.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

By decree of December 12, 1914, called the *Plan de Vera Cruz*, Carranza announced that as First Chief he "would put into effect all laws and measures necessary to satisfy the economic, social, and political needs of the nation, effecting thereby such reforms as public opinion demanded as indispensable to the guarantee of equality to all Mexicans." Carranza promised the following: agrarian reform in favor of the establishment of small properties, the breakup of large estates, and return to the villages of the common lands (*ejidos*) of which they had been unlawfully deprived; equitable taxation, applicable particularly to real property; improvement of the condition of workers, rural and urban; electoral reform to make the suffrage effective; revision of the marriage laws; strict enforcement of the constitutional provisions relating to the Church; revision of the civil, criminal, and commercial codes; reform of judicial procedure to facilitate rapid and efficient justice; revision of the laws relating to the exploitation of mines, oil, waters, forests, and other natural resources, in order to destroy the monopolies created by the old regime; and in general such laws as will guarantee to Mexicans the full enjoyment of their rights under the law.<sup>4</sup>

This was the first formalized program of revolutionary objectives. Naturally it was not implemented in its entirety by Carranza, nor indeed by his successors even to the present date. However, Carranza did undertake in good faith to fulfill some of the pledges. He issued a number of decree laws, called "pre-constitutional decrees," which covered a wide range of subjects, including land, labor, Church, and local government. For example, the old office of *Jefe político*, the local tyrant serving Díaz, was abolished and the free municipality guaranteed; the office of vice president was abolished, and the presidential term was reduced from six to four years, with no re-election; peonage, or debt servitude, was abolished; the Federal Government assumed jurisdiction over labor legislation, and issued decrees on the subjects of minimum wage, working hours, and child labor; absolute divorce was legalized; and, more particularly relating to the Church, a number of Carranza decrees removed any doubt, indeed if any existed, that it

<sup>4</sup> *Codificación de los decretos del C. Venustiano Carranza* (Mexico, 1915), p. 136.

was his intention to subordinate the Church to strict governmental control.

But of all these pre-constitutional decrees, the Agrarian Decree of January 6, 1915, which provided for the restitution of lands to the dispossessed villages, was the most significant. It has been described as the first constructive act of the Revolution, in the sense that "it was the first specifically legal statement of an answer to the agrarian aspirations of the masses of the people."<sup>5</sup> When embodied in Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917, it became the basis of the whole program of agrarian reform.

Although it had been Carranza's original intention to incorporate into the Constitution of 1857 the various reform-decrees published during the course of the Civil War, this decision was altered in favor of a new organic law when it was discovered that the reforms would not fit easily into the old constitution, and that, moreover, these revolutionary gains would be better secured if woven into a new constitution. Accordingly, a constitutional convention met in Querétaro and produced the present Mexican Constitution of 1917.

It is an interesting fact that the model constitution which Carranza submitted to the convention to serve as a basis for its discussions was remarkably moderate as compared with the instrument eventually adopted. It evidently was not the intention of the First Chief to move farther to the left than the position he had already taken in his decree-laws. This means that those most characteristic and radical principles of the constitution, embodied in Articles 3 (education), 27 (land and natural resources), 123 (labor), and 130 (Church), came from sources other than Carranza. The group in the convention responsible for an advanced revolutionary program which blueprinted profound changes in the social and economic structure of Mexico were the *Jacobinos Obregonistas*, those deputies who found inspiration in General Alvaro Obregón. They, including forty-five generals, constituted the majority, and consistently outvoted the *Liberales Carrancistas*.<sup>6</sup>

Although the convention went beyond Carranza's proposals in several important respects, there seems to be no evidence that this

<sup>5</sup> Eyler N. Simpson, *The Ejido, Mexico's Way Out* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1937), p. 54.

<sup>6</sup> L. Melgarejo Randolf and J. Fernández Rojas, *El congreso constituyente de 1917* (Mexico, 1917), pp. 749-750.

was displeasing to the First Chief. He accepted the instrument as finally adopted by the convention, and as president, swore to defend and respect it, and to make others do likewise. Since the Constitution of 1917 provided the Revolution with a developed program which charted the course of the Mexican nation for years to come, it is necessary, before venturing upon an evaluation of the progress made along that course, to analyze this constitution as a very real point of departure of the Mexican Revolution.

## II. *The Constitution of 1917*

The constitutional program included the following more or less specific objectives: land reform, labor organization, anti-clericalism, nationalism, popular education, and political democracy. The general nature and meaning of each of these revolutionary objectives will be briefly examined.

With respect to land reform, Article 27, called the most important of all the articles in the constitution, not only established the form and character of land distribution, as based on Carranza's Agrarian Decree of 1915, but it also enunciated a revolutionary concept of property. In the first place, having separated the surface lands from the subsoils, which latter were declared nationalized and inalienable, the constitution provided for several forms of land ownership, namely, communal groups holding lands collectively, ordinary private ownership, and modern corporate ownership.<sup>7</sup>

Since the State, in constituting private property, reserved the right to impose certain limitations, such as expropriation, "in the public interest," this meant that the State could intervene in the distribution of lands. The villages and the landless peasants were declared to have the right, as a matter of "public utility," to be given lands, these to be taken, with nominal indemnification, from the large neighboring properties. Thus, the latifundia had no legal existence, but had to be broken up to create and strengthen the small holding, the only form of property under the constitution which was protected.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Andrés Molina Enríquez, "El Artículo 27 de la Constitución Federal," in *Boletín de la Secretaría de Gobernación* (Sept., 1922), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, "The Balance of Agrarian Reform," in A. P. Whitaker, ed., *Mexico Today* (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1940), p. 127.



Constitutional Article 27 represented a compromise between conflicting views at the Querétaro Convention. The more radical delegates wanted to abolish individual private property altogether. Although their demands were rejected as "utopian," the nationalization of the subsoil was a distinctly socialistic measure. As for the surface lands, the constitutional fathers straddled the fence. With respect to the *ejidos*, although they were granted to the villages collectively, the framers of the constitution did not set out to create a permanent form of land tenure in opposition to private property. It seems that this collective form of land possession was intended to be only a temporary expedient, a bridge over which the *campesinos* would eventually pass to private ownership.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, despite its seeming abandonment, the right of private property in land was preserved, although it was subjected to various limitations, including expropriation with or without compensation, for reasons of public interest or utility. So great were the possibilities of destroying the substance of private property by official declarations of public policy, that a well-known authority has declared, "private property now disappeared, to give place to a limited right of usufruct."<sup>10</sup> This, however, is a somewhat pessimistic and distorted view of Article 27, which, while providing for aspects of socialism and collectivism, still retained the essential elements of private property.

Even as Article 27 declared a new theory of property and thus became the source of all subsequent agrarian legislation, so Article 123 declared a new theory of labor which served as inspiration for both labor organization and legislation. The article, a veritable labor code containing advanced provisions relating to time limits on labor, housing and community provisions, wage and financial regulations, the organization of workers and the settlement of trade disputes, and accidents and disease, was given to a country which had barely felt the impact of industrialization, and in which there was no industrial labor to speak of. Under the terms of this article, which was completely foreign in its inspiration, Mexican labor was afforded the means, particularly with the biased support of a paternal government, of forcing employers to accept workers'

<sup>9</sup> Molina Enríquez, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Tannenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

demands. Why this seeming anomaly: a progressive and elaborate labor code for a non-industrial state and an infant labor movement?

To a certain extent Mexico was looking to the future and preparing beforehand for the eventual and inevitable industrialization with its attendant labor problems. Moreover, it was realized that the trade-union movement, if fostered and strengthened by the State, would become a powerful instrument under State control and manipulation, not only to put the brakes on private industry, but to bulwark the government in the political arena. More immediately, however, the labor article was a by-product of the anti-foreign program which will be discussed presently. At this point it will suffice to note that, in 1917, most of the industry and commerce of Mexico was in the hands of foreigners, and industrial labor, such as existed, was foreign employed. An organized labor movement would lend additional support to the government in its efforts to curb the power of foreign capital. Thus, Article 123 derived much of its inspiration from the new nationalism born of the Revolution.

The Mexican Revolution, called "socio-economic," was equally nationalistic. There is abundant evidence in the new constitution of a revolutionary effort to integrate a badly divided nation, exclude foreign economic controls, and recover Mexico for the Mexicans. This was a natural reaction from the conditions and policies of the Díaz period, when, because of the exceptional prevalence of foreign economic enterprise, the Mexican Government was called the mother of foreigners and the stepmother of the Mexicans themselves. It was a period when all things foreign were aped and cultivated, and those indigenous to Mexico were disparaged. In addition, Mexico was so badly compartmentalized into distinct racial, social, and economic groups that in truth a Mexican nation did not exist. The nationalistic program, therefore, sought to restore the faith of Mexicans in themselves; to form a united, proud, self-conscious nation.

Of those numerous constitutional provisions which bear on this objective, only a few can be selected for mention. Many of these occur in Article 27, thereby lending additional significance to that most important constitutional article. Foreigners cannot acquire ownership of surface lands unless they subscribe to the Calvo Clause, that is, agree to forswear the right of diplomatic protection

by their own governments in disputes regarding the property in question. However, under no circumstances can foreigners acquire direct ownership of lands and waters within sixty miles of the international borders and thirty miles of the coast line. Foreign companies are unqualifiedly denied the right to acquire ownership of lands, waters, and their appurtenances. The nationalization of the subsoil was in reality an anti-foreign measure and had for its purpose the recovery by Mexico of her mineral resources which had fallen almost in their entirety into foreign ownership. Although the constitution itself guaranteed against retroactive legislation (Article 14), it is not entirely clear that this guarantee was originally intended to be applied to the petroleum properties whose ownership had been acquired, largely by foreigners, under legislation enacted by the Díaz administration. Later, when it was found that there was too powerful foreign opposition to permit national recovery of the petroleum resources, the government aspired to partial recovery at least by application of the principle of the "positive act." This meant that the oil companies stood to lose their titles to a vast acreage of unproved lands.

Article 123, as already noted, was inspired in part by the nationalistic motive. Mexican labor was to be organized and favored by governmental support in order to serve as a makeweight against a predominantly foreign-owned Mexican industry. With the aid of a well-organized and disciplined Mexican labor front, the State hoped to erect a barrier against the dominance of foreign investments in the country.

Other evidences of Mexican nationalism in the constitution were provisions which declared that Mexicans should be preferred over foreigners for all kinds of concessions (Article 32), that only Mexicans by birth could serve as ministers of religious creeds (Article 130), and that the National Executive had the exclusive right to expel from the Republic forthwith and without judicial process, any foreigner whose presence be deemed inexpedient (Article 33). These and other constitutional measures were bitterly criticized as a denial of rights and inimical to foreigners. As a matter of fact, they merely represented an effort by the Mexican Government to equalize the status of Mexicans and foreigners. Because of the former preferred position of the foreigner, this necessarily meant a lowering of his status. This is not to deny, however, that in the

heat of the Revolution there developed a pronounced anti-foreign bias, a natural consequence of the earlier alliance between foreign capital and the Díaz dictatorship.

Another revolutionary objective found in the constitution was anti-clericalism. Carranza believed that a strict enforcement of the Laws of the Reform, dating from the Juárez period, would be a sufficient deterrent to the recovery of politico-economic power by the Catholic Church in Mexico. However, the radical delegates of the Querétaro Convention were not so minded. They insisted on additional and more severe measures to drive the Church out of politics, to destroy its social influence, and to confine it strictly to the field of religion. To accomplish this they contradicted the guarantee of religious freedom and, instead of separating Church and State, put the Church under the domination of the State.

Since the constitution recognizes no corporate or juridic personality in the Church, and since priests were to be considered merely as persons exercising a profession, and thus to be licensed by the State, this meant that the control of the hierarchy could be ignored and that the State, in licensing priests, would virtually be usurping the prerogative of the bishops. These were the most serious provisions which threatened the very existence of the Church. But there were other constitutional provisions which impaired the status and activities of the Church and its clergy. It could own no property, either church buildings or schools or residences, for all were subject to nationalization. It could not conduct any schools, or hospitals, or any charitable or eleemosynary institutions. All priests and ministers were denied political rights and prohibited from engaging in any political activity. Finally, all matters relating to religious worship and outward ecclesiastical forms were made subjects of exclusive federal jurisdiction. To the states was given the power to determine the maximum number of ministers of religious creeds according to the needs of each locality.

Anti-clericalism, the most important feature of the Juárez liberal movement, was thus inherited and improved on by the "Jacobins of Querétaro." However, in their zealous imposing of limitations on the Church, which in truth was but a shadow of its former self, they proceeded dangerously close to crossing the line separating anti-clericalism from anti-religion. As will be noted shortly, this line was momentarily crossed a few years later.

All reform movements in Mexico, even in colonial days, recognized the importance of popular education, although these hopes never materialized. Hence, Madero and the revolutionaries who followed him accepted the fact that if the Mexican masses were to be rescued from the social and economic depths, this could be accomplished only with their own intelligent and understanding efforts developed by education. The Revolution recognized that "*Educar es redimir*—'To educate is to redeem,' and that *Educar es gobernar*—'To educate is to govern.'"<sup>11</sup>

Although the importance of education was understood by the constitutional fathers, they translated little of this into constitutional law. Among the powers of the Federal Congress (Article 73) was included the following: "to establish, organize, and maintain throughout the Republic, rural, elementary, superior, secondary and professional schools. . . . The Federation shall have jurisdiction over the institutions which it shall establish, sustain and organize, without abridging the liberty of the states to legislate on matters relating to education." Thus the constitutional basis was established for federal intervention in education. However, owing to a misguided revolutionary belief in "states' rights" and "free municipalities,"<sup>12</sup> the Federal Government refrained from exercising any direct influence over education until 1921, when a Ministry of Education was created under the direction of José Vasconcelos.

Constitutional Article 3 represented the prime concern of the convention, on the subject of education. It provided that all primary schools, public and private, should be strictly non-sectarian, both in direction and instruction. Since most of the schools of Mexico were private, and since an overwhelming majority of these were under the control of the Church, the ostensible purpose of Article 3 was to eradicate clerical influence from the field of education and thus enable Mexican children to be educated in schools friendly to the Revolution.

Except for a few new provisions dealing with such subjects as no presidential re-election and free municipalities, there was little added to the constitution representative of revolutionary political

<sup>11</sup> George I. Sanchez, *Mexico: A Revolution by Education* (New York, 1936), p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

objectives. Despite this seeming oversight, the new organic charter was quite as much a program for democratic progress as it was for economic and social reform. This was so because of the liberal and democratic character of the old Constitution of 1857, which was incorporated almost in its entirety into the new constitution.

The Constitution of 1857, influenced as it was by the French Revolution and the Constitution of the United States, expressed the spirit of nineteenth-century individualistic liberalism. With its detailed bill of rights, both civil and political, coupled with the structural features of a popular, representative government modeled after that of the United States, the Constitution of 1857 chartered a course of democratic progress. The fact that little or no progress was made in that direction down to 1917 did not invalidate in the slightest the potentialities of the formula for a renewed effort to move toward a democratic goal.

Shortly after its adoption, the Mexican Constitution of 1917 was described in a speech before the American Bar Association as a "hot-house constitution," and a "worthless scrap of paper."<sup>13</sup> Remarkably enough, the man who was so severe, and so incorrect, in his criticism of the Mexican Constitution was himself responsible, several years earlier, for the following sage observation: "A Constitution as an instrument of government should be judged by the occasion that called it into being, the people to whom it is addressed, and the ends it is expected to accomplish."<sup>14</sup> Measured by these criteria, the Constitution of 1917 emerges as a peculiarly indigenous instrument, adapted to local conditions, which synthesized the inchoate ideals of the revolutionaries and, in spite of its inherent errors, made possible the progress of the Mexican social movement. We now turn from our description of the origins and nature of the revolutionary program to a brief survey of its implementation in the succeeding years to the present mid-century.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Burgess, "A Hot-House Constitution: The Mexican Constitution of 1917." (Presented at the meeting of the American Bar Association at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Sept. 4, 5, and 6, 1917), in William H. Burgess, *Addresses*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> William H. Burgess, "A Comparative Study of the Constitutions of the United States of Mexico and the United States of America" (a paper read before the Texas Bar Association, July 13, 1905), in *ibid.*, p. 11.

### III. *Implementing the Revolutionary Program*

Since 1917 the successive national administrations in Mexico have been called "revolutionary governments," a term supposedly indicative of their devotion to the revolutionary program. As was to be expected, there was considerable unevenness in the course of post-constitutional developments. At times these governments moved farther to the left than their constitutional mandate; at other times revolutionary ardor cooled so noticeably as to raise fears that the Revolution had come to an end.

The revolutionary action of President Venustiano Carranza was extremely moderate. He did nothing important in education or in connection with labor, and allowed the new anti-clerical articles to remain a dead letter. Also, the land reform seemed to have died a-borning.<sup>15</sup> In Carranza's favor, however, it can be said that he stubbornly guarded Mexico's natural sovereignty against all threats of foreign violation.

When General Obregón and his Sonora compatriots rose against Carranza, they justified their rebellion as a defense of revolutionary principles; therefore the so-called "Revindicating Revolution." In a real sense revolutionary government began with President Alvaro Obregón. Almost immediately Obregón enacted agrarian legislation, and the curve recording grants of land to the villages suddenly took a sharp upturn. Like Carranza, Obregón jealously guarded national sovereignty against foreign encroachment, as evidenced by his refusal to accept conditional recognition from the United States Government. He, however, did enter into agreements (Bucareli Agreements, 1923), which imposed some limitation on the Mexican Government's freedom of action in connection with the expropriation of the petroleum properties owned by Americans.

Labor organization, which was held in check by Carranza, flourished under a benevolent Obregón administration. Mexican labor, under the leadership of Luis Morones, head of the C.R.O.M. (*Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana*), made great progress, not only in the number of unions formed but in the development

<sup>15</sup> Only 190 villages received land after the promulgation of the decree of 1915 until the end of the Carranza regime in 1920. Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

of great political power. Morones himself became a member of the President's cabinet.

As has been noted, it was in the Obregón administration that the Federal Government created a Department of Education, and, under the inspiration and guiding genius of José Vasconcelos, assumed the responsibility of extending education to the rural areas, to the isolated and neglected Indians and *campesinos*. Vasconcelos, imbued with the revolutionary spirit, was responsible for a pioneering educational program, combining the conventional school with instruction in the practical arts, which was destined to become one of the crowning glories of the Revolution. Vasconcelos is said to have given "a new social meaning to the educative action of the Revolution."<sup>16</sup>

The fires of revolutionary zeal blazed with equal warmth in the breast of Obregón's successor, Plutarco Elías Calles. In general, President Calles continued the policies initiated by Obregón. This was particularly true of education, labor, and agrarian reform. However, President Calles sponsored two pieces of legislation, overlooked by his predecessor, which got him into a bit of trouble with the United States Government. These were the Alien Land Bill and the Petroleum Law. Both laws, implementing long-neglected features of Article 27 of the constitution, were alleged by the State Department to violate acquired rights of American citizens in Mexico. Following the Dwight Morrow mission to Mexico, a compromise was reached when both parties agreed to recede somewhat from their more extreme positions.

Great internal turmoil, and foreign repercussions as well, were precipitated by executive enforcement of the anti-clerical Article 130. Although some of the Mexican states had enacted anti-clerical legislation, the national government itself, during the administrations of Carranza and Obregón, made little or no attempt to enforce the constitutional articles defining the status of religious sects. It remained for President Calles, provoked by clerical resurgence and alleged disregard for the constitution, to order the rigid enforcement of its religious provisions. The severity of governmental assault on an enfeebled Catholic Church, whose threat to the Revolution was more apparent than real, provoked a suspen-

<sup>16</sup> Herzog, *op. cit.*, p. 16.



sion of all services and religious ministrations. For the balance of the Calles administration Catholic priests were not allowed to function in Mexico.

Of course the President was bitterly criticised, both in and out of Mexico, as a communistic atheist who intended to abolish religion. Although it is true that Calles acted with excessive severity, it is equally true, keeping in mind the intentions of the constitutional fathers, that his acts were violative neither of the letter nor the spirit of the constitutional mandate which required that the Catholic Church, the traditional enemy of liberalism and social revolution in Mexico, must be kept under the strictest governmental surveillance.

There was a marked recession of the tides of revolution during the *Maximato*. This was the period, 1929-1933, when the puppet presidents, Portes Gil, Ortiz Rubio, and Abelardo Rodríguez, responded to the manipulations of General Calles, the *jefe máximo* of the Revolution. Calles and the other "men of the Revolution," the generals and the labor leaders, had acquired wealth, by whatever means, and had thus become a new bourgeoisie, a new class of capitalists with social and economic conservatism. The Dwight Morrow theory that the way to eradicate radicals was to make them prosperous—to make them hold property and then they would stop seizing that of others—seems to have been realized.

In Calles' view, the agrarian program was a failure. What Mexico needed was a class of small, independent farmers. Consequently, a halt was called to land redistribution. This, combined with the compromise on the oil question, the apparent Church-State settlement, the drafting of a modified labor code (1931), seemed to indicate that enthusiasm for reform had disappeared and that the Mexican Revolution had run a cycle. "Mexico has washed her hands of the Revolution," wrote Carleton Beals in 1931. The programs of the Revolution, he declared, had been quietly buried.<sup>17</sup> This was a premature and wholly inaccurate judgment, as subsequent developments proved.

But in one respect at least a revolutionary objective was vigorously pursued by the *Maximato*; this was anti-clericalism. A sure-

<sup>17</sup> Carleton Beals, "Has Mexico Betrayed Her Revolution?" in *The New Republic* (July 22, 1931), pp. 249-250.

fire resort of Mexican revolutionaries to divert popular attention from more important issues was to raise the cry of clerical menace. The clerical issue had served on many occasions as a convenient whipping boy for embarrassed and "tired" revolutionaries. In 1931 several of the states, with the apparent approval of the Federal Government, imposed such unreasonable restrictive limitations on the number of clergy that religious activities were crippled. Because of the anti-Church outburst many of the prelates went into exile, and the Archbishop of Mexico, who was also Apostolic Delegate, was deported as an "undesirable alien," although he was a native of Mexico. This anti-clerical assault culminated in an amendment of Article 3, the education article.

In July, 1934, General Calles said, "It is necessary that we enter into a new phase of the Revolution which I shall call the psychological revolutionary period; we must enter into and take possession of the minds of the children, the consciences of the young, because they do belong and should belong to the Revolution. . . . It is absolutely necessary to drive the enemy out of that entrenchment where the clergy has been, where the Conservatives have been—I refer to Education."<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Article 3 of the constitution was amended, November 28, 1934, to require the teaching of "socialism" and the combating of "fanaticism" in the schools. Moreover, under the terms of this amendment, no religious cult could maintain schools of *any* grade. Since this applied to seminaries for the training of priests, and since foreign priests could not function in Mexico, is it straining the point to contend that the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom was violated?

What was "socialistic education"? Since there was no agreed definition, there was a remarkable lack of uniformity in the teaching of socialism; it ranged all the way from Marxism, unalloyed, to a mild social-reform theory. In a few cases the teachers were required to make an "Ideological Declaration," sponsored by the Federal Department of Education, which read in part as follows: "I declare that I am an atheist, an irreconcilable enemy of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, that I will endeavor to destroy it, detaching consciences from the bonds of any religious worship, and that I am prepared to fight against the clergy any-

<sup>18</sup> Wilfred Parsons, *Mexican Martyrdom* (New York, 1936), p. 223.

where and whenever it may be necessary."<sup>19</sup> A Protestant missionary worker in Mexico wrote in 1935: "The whole educational system of the country was being revamped for the purpose of propagating atheistic communism."<sup>20</sup> Although this undoubtedly was too sweeping a judgment, it nevertheless was true that the status of the Church, and even religion itself, reached its nadir during the first year of the Cárdenas administration.

When President Cárdenas saw that by keeping the religious issue stirred up he was delaying the more essential social and agrarian programs, he decided to call a halt. He said, "The government will not commit the error of previous administrations by considering the religious question as a problem pre-eminent to other issues involved in the national program. Antireligious campaigns would only result in further resistance and definitely postpone economic revival."<sup>21</sup> Since that date (March, 1936) there has been a steady improvement of the status of the Catholic Church in Mexico, although, significantly, there has been no modification of the anti-religious laws. They remain in reserve, as it were, to be applied whenever the government should will it.

President Cárdenas' administration marked the culmination of the Revolution. Then it was that the revolutionary course was directed so far to the left that it bordered on Communism. Because the President's sympathies aligned him with the workers against the employers, the landless peasant against the large landowner, the poor and weak against the wealthy and influential, he so broadened and intensified paternal governmental activity in a renewed drive toward the revolutionary goals as to raise charges that he had started a new revolution, not merely carried forward the impetus of the original movement.

First, and most significant, Cárdenas speeded up the distribution of land among the villages, for, since he believed that government belongs to those who own the land, he wanted to be certain that it was the common people who owned the land. From 1934 to 1939 Cárdenas distributed more land, and more persons were bene-

<sup>19</sup> Charles Macfarland, *Chaos in Mexico: The Conflict of Church and State* (New York, 1935), p. 101.

<sup>20</sup> "The Wind Shifts in Mexico," in *The Missionary Review of the World* (March, 1938), p. 123.

<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, March 6, 1936.

fited, than during the entire period from 1915 to 1934. Cárdenas repudiated the Calles, or *veterano* view, that the communal village holding should give way ultimately to the small, individual, private holding. The *agraristas*, an opposite school of thought to which Cárdenas evidently subscribed, held that the *ejido* should be a first step to the eventual socialization of all land.<sup>22</sup>

Labor power which had gone into eclipse during the *Maximato*, was restored, thanks to the benevolent paternalism of President Cárdenas and the promotional genius of Vicente Lombardo Tolezano. The President's bias toward labor as opposed to the employer was clearly and frankly expressed in what might be regarded as a directive to governmental members on the labor arbitration and conciliation boards; he said: "The modern conception of the functions of the state and the very nature of labor legislation . . . requires that doubtful cases be decided in favor of the weaker party [i.e., the worker]. To mete out equal treatment to two parties that are not equal, is neither to administer justice nor to act equitably."<sup>23</sup> In further evidence of his pro-labor position, the President said, "Any employers feeling weary of the social struggle may turn their industries over to the workers or to the government." However, President Cárdenas did not believe that workers should think of taking over factories until they were technically fitted for management.

If the agrarian and labor policies indicated a strong inclination toward the left, this found considerable reinforcement in the passage and application of the Expropriation Law (November 23, 1936), which authorized expropriations of private property "for public and social welfare," and more particularly, to promote "the equal distribution of wealth held and monopolized to the exclusive advantage of a few persons with prejudice to society in general or to any particular social class."<sup>24</sup> Under the broad meaning of this law the government was free to expropriate, without judicial check, whatever industries it might desire to nationalize. It was a blank check to President Cárdenas to socialize as extensively as he wished.

<sup>22</sup> Charles A. Thomson, "Mexico's Challenge to Foreign Capital," in *Foreign Policy Reports* (August 15, 1937), p. 127.

<sup>23</sup> Charles A. Thomson, "Mexico's Social Revolution," in *Foreign Policy Reports* (August 1, 1937), p. 120.

<sup>24</sup> *Diario Oficial*, Nov. 25, 1936.

Although the law was applied to a number of different kinds of industries, which were converted into workers' cooperatives, the principal objects of expropriation were the National Railways of Mexico and the petroleum industry. The oil expropriations of 1938 were political and nationalistic as well as economic. The oil companies, foreign-owned, had, it was charged, assumed a position amounting to rebellion, and thus left the President no choice but to expropriate. Whatever the merits or justification of the act, this, together with other acts of nationalization, embarked Mexico on the road to state socialism.

This direction seemed to be implicit both in the constitution of the reorganized official party, called since 1938 the *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (P.R.M.), and the Second Six-Year Plan (approved November, 1939). In its Declaration of Principles and Program of Action the P.R.M. declared that "one of its fundamental objectives is to prepare the people for a worker's democracy and a socialistic regime." "It shall work," it continued, "for the progressive nationalization of major industries as a basis for the complete independence of Mexico and the transformation of her social system."<sup>25</sup> In the Second Six-Year Plan, which was the program of the Revolutionary Party for the next presidential term (1941 to 1946), again the emphasis is upon the eventual transformation of the economic system along collective lines under the aegis of the State, although the full attainment of this ambitious objective within the six-year period was not contemplated.<sup>26</sup>

Although the incoming President, General Ávila Camacho, subscribed unequivocally in his campaign speeches to the program of the P.R.M.,<sup>27</sup> his administration inaugurated a steady retreat from the extreme left, a retreat which has been continued by his successor President Miguel Alemán. This moderation of governmental policy was soon interpreted as reaction, and the cry was raised that the Revolution was over. A number of articles appeared, written

<sup>25</sup> Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, *Pacto constitutivo, declaración de principios, programa y estatutos* (Mexico, 1938), pp. 9-27.

<sup>26</sup> Mexican Revolution Party, *The Second Six Year Plan, 1941-1946*, Mexico, 1939.

<sup>27</sup> *Ávila Camacho y su ideología: la revolución en Marcha* (P.R.M., Mexico, 1940), p. 7.

by intellectuals, some of them bearing the identical title "Mexico in Crisis."

Daniel Cosío Villegas, a leading Mexican economist, wrote in 1946: "Mexico has been suffering now for several years a crisis which is becoming more aggravated daily. . . . The crisis arises from the fact that the objectives of the Revolution have been fulfilled to the degree that the term 'Revolution' now lacks sense. But, as is customary, the politicians continue to be guided by the most immediate objectives, ignoring the importance of long-range policy."<sup>28</sup>

According to Cosío Villegas, Mexico has lost, with the alleged end of the Revolution, a powerful motor impulse, without finding anything to substitute for it. Cosío Villegas is very pessimistic in his evaluation of the Revolution and its leaders. He says: "All the men of the Mexican Revolution without exception have been inferior to its exigencies; . . . the nation has been incapable of producing throughout a whole generation and in the midst of a great crisis, a single statesman of ample stature to warrant him a place in history. . . . The men of the Revolution can now be judged, with certain assurance, as magnificent destroyers, but nothing that they created to take the place of the destroyed has been an unqualified improvement."<sup>29</sup>

Jesús Silva Herzog takes issue with this judgment, although he too believes that the Revolution has run its course. By 1943, says Herzog, the Revolution had died quietly without anyone noticing what was happening. It is the Silva Herzog theory that the termination of the Revolution represented victory for a new middle class. The old bourgeoisie, though rudely shaken by the Revolution, but never completely destroyed, gradually recovered. Recently it united with a new bourgeoisie to form a new social class. According to Silva Herzog, "The new elements sprung from the ranks of the Revolution, i.e., new-rich officials and ex-officials, traffickers of governmental influence, and dealers who profited from public works contracts or the sale of inferior materials. A few made fortunes acceptable to the morality of our times. How-

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Extremos de América* (Mexico, 1949), includes the article "La Crisis de México" (Nov., 1946), p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

ever, the rich united because of a community of interests and thus neutralized the Revolution."<sup>30</sup> More and more effectively this new middle class used its power to curb the creative and progressive tendencies of the government.

Unlike Cosío Villegas, Silva Herzog concedes that the Revolution accelerated the progress of Mexico. It broke the power of the great landed proprietors, brought the country out of semi-feudalism, and introduced "pre-capitalist" conditions in some regions, and "full capitalism" in others, notably in the large cities. "It seems to me," says this Mexican liberal, "that the work accomplished weighted the balance favorably."<sup>31</sup> However, in his view the policy of the present Alemán administration is not revolutionary, but is a new "course determined by the economic and political interdependence of nations."

Another Mexican writer, who denies the end of the Revolution, argues with considerable logic that "one can say that the objectives [of the Revolution] have been reached only when one can say that their causes have ceased to exist. The Revolution will be over when there are no proletarian hungry, no illiterates, no greedy landlords; when the State is able to guarantee to man his right to life without the stigma of foreign exploitation; that is, when there is established a real democratic order under law and human rights; then it can be said that the Revolution has been achieved."<sup>32</sup>

This writer, Leopoldo Peniche Vallado, warns: "It is necessary to be alert against the subtle reactionary maneuver. Beware those who hold that the work of the Revolution has ended, that written legislation has secured all the rights of the working classes." It is the view of Peniche Vallado, and a host of other radicals in Mexico, that the Revolution can never end until capitalism is overthrown. Evidently there is considerable disagreement in Mexico concerning the present status of the Revolution. Let us make our own independent inquiry into the matter.

<sup>30</sup> Jesús Silva Herzog, "Rise and Fall of Mexico's Revolution," in *The Nation* (Oct. 22, 1949), p. 396.

<sup>31</sup> Jesús Silva Herzog, *Meditaciones sobre México, ensayos y notas* (Mexico, 1948), p. 35.

<sup>32</sup> Leopoldo Peniche Vallado, *Crítica y análisis de la revolución mexicana* (Mérida, 1948), p. 18.

*IV. Alemán's Program and Its Implementation*

In the first place Miguel Alemán, a lawyer and former bureaucrat, is a civilian President; the first in Mexico for a long time. That fact alone is significant. It is indicative of a new order in Mexican political life. Although it would be a serious error to undervalue the army as a political factor in Mexico today, it does appear that the military is displaying a greater acquiescence in civilian rule than it ever did in the past. Perhaps they realize that the need of their leadership in the Revolution is over; that a new era must now be inaugurated, a constructive era; and obviously the training and psychology of the professional soldier does not fit him for constructive statesmanship.

The Alemán administration has definitely embarked Mexico upon the constructive phase of revolutionary development. The central feature of its program is industrialization, which is expected to increase the national income and elevate standards of living. It is realized that truly effective reforms in education, public health and welfare, agriculture, and public works are all dependent on a vastly increased national revenue. But since conditions in Mexico are not favorable for an industrial program large enough to pay for both the initial basic capital equipment and subsequent development; since, in other words, Alemán realizes that Mexico unaided cannot hope to realize its revolutionary hopes by attempting to raise itself by its bootstraps, he looks to foreign capital for assistance. This frank confession of dependence on foreign capital is reminiscent of the Díaz policy. Is this where we came in?

President Alemán does not propose to repeat the mistakes of Porfirio Díaz. Mexico will not be sold out to foreigners, for nationalism is still a cherished principle of the Revolution. Moreover, the administration declares that the period of capitalistic free-booting is ended. Permanent profitable business relations must be established on the middle ground of respect for Mexican national sovereignty on the one hand, and the right of the investor to a reasonable profit on the other. Thus, while extending the hand of welcome to the foreign investor and businessman, Alemán warns them not to expect exorbitant profits or special privilege. They are guaranteed equal protection under the law; no more. It is



under this general policy that Alemán is inviting foreign capital to Mexico.<sup>83</sup>

Reassured that the threat to private enterprise is over in Mexico, foreign enterprise is flowing into the country in ever-increasing volume. "Automobile manufacturers, electrical appliance makers, retail-chain stores, many of the biggest names in the world's roster of business, have initiated and expanded their Mexican services."<sup>84</sup> No end to this expanding trend is in sight.

Not only is private American capital venturing once more into Mexico, but the United States Government is operating on a larger scale as banker to the financial needs of Mexico. Recently the Export-Import Bank extended credits of about \$150 million to be used for highways, railway improvements, and the purchase of hydroelectric equipment. Mexico is supposed to match these funds. Significantly none of this loan is to be applied to the oil industry.<sup>85</sup>

Although Pemex, the oil monopoly, is now producing at the rate of nearly 70 million barrels per year, which is almost double that of the early years of expropriation,<sup>86</sup> it is not able to meet the demands of the expanding economy of Mexico. Since it lacks both the capital and the technical skill to carry on an efficient exploration program, it is frankly seeking foreign aid. Foreign companies have been invited to enter into contracts which provide that they explore and bring in wells on their own money. Out of production will come their share of 15 to 18 per cent of the profits after the costs have been reimbursed. The major companies, regarding 15 per cent an inadequate return on risk capital, are not interested. So far, Pemex has been able to get but one American contract, that with the Pauley-Davies consortium.<sup>87</sup> Evidently President Alemán must make the terms more attractive to the foreign com-

<sup>83</sup> Ramón Beteta, "Política económica mexicana," in *Revista de Economía* (April 1950), p. 123.

<sup>84</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, May 15, 1950.

<sup>85</sup> *New York Times*, Sept. 2, 1950.

<sup>86</sup> The oil production has been, in millions of barrels: 1938:39; 1940:44, 1946:47; and 1948:59. As for new wells drilled, the figures are: 1947:51; 1948:32; 1949:180. Banco Nacional de México, *Economic Situation in Mexico* (Jan., 1950), p. 13. In the peak year 1922, 182 million barrels were produced.

<sup>87</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, May 1, 1950.

panies. But this he does not regard as politically expedient, for public opinion is still strongly against foreign oil.

Industry enjoys the Mexican government's tenderest solicitude. The "Ley de Fomento de la Industria de Transformación" (1946) complements an earlier act, which provided high tariff protection, by granting basic industries tax exemption for a period of ten years. The principal agency used by the government to promote industrialization is *Nacional Financiera*, a government-owned bond and investment corporation, somewhat comparable to our R.F.C., which extends credits for the establishment and development of basic industries. Its chief holdings at the present date are in steel, paper, coal, electric power, fertilizer, artificial silk, and sugar.<sup>38</sup> Government money and effort go into those projects too large or too long-range to attract private capital.

Professor Tannenbaum, in his recent book *Mexico: The Struggle for Peace and Bread*, raises serious doubts concerning the soundness of Mexico's industrialization policy, considered quite apart from its influence on the expanding role of government, for in fact the government has become the arbiter of Mexican economy. He contends that, because of the public policy of paying too much for its capital (interest rates are 7 to 8 per cent), coupled with high and often prohibitive tariffs, industrialization is being purchased at a price greater than the economy of Mexico can bear. As an alternative, Tannenbaum believes that there should be more emphasis on localized industry and arts and crafts as a supplement to a basic agricultural economy.<sup>39</sup>

Alemán has not by any means de-emphasized the importance of Mexico's agrarian problem.<sup>40</sup> He is cognizant of the fact that the overwhelming majority of Mexicans live on the soil, that only 12 per cent of the country's area is arable, and that most of this is deficient in production. For example, the average corn yield per acre in Mexico is ten bushels, as compared with sixty bushels in Iowa. This is due to a number of reasons, including poor land, lack of fertilization, and inefficient utilization of farm labor. It

<sup>38</sup> *The Journal of Commerce* (New York), August 31, 1950.

<sup>39</sup> Tannenbaum, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-246.

<sup>40</sup> Mario Sousa, "Realizaciones agrarias de México," in *Revista de Economía* (Nov., 1949), p. 316.

takes 126 man-hours to produce an acre of corn in Mexico; in the United States, with improved methods, it takes but 27 man-hours.<sup>41</sup>

The need of increased food production in Mexico to keep up with the sensational increase in population <sup>42</sup> has been met in small measure by reclamation programs which have been pushed vigorously for several years. The construction of dams and irrigation projects has become a number one item on Mexico's public works program. In evidence of the importance of irrigation, a Ministry of Hydraulic Resources has been added to the cabinet. Two great TVA-like developments are underway, namely Papaloápan and Tepalcatepec. These typify the regional approach to solve the problem of a large country with so little land available for cultivation.

It is significant that the land reclaimed and put to irrigation goes to outright private ownership, through a *colono* or settler system. The government has discovered that the *ejido* system, with its lack of individual ownership and of the profit motive, was not meeting the production demands imposed on Mexican agriculture. The *colonos* themselves are not producing as they might were their farms mechanized. From the 1948 Export-Import Bank loan, \$5,000,000 was used for farm machinery.<sup>43</sup>

Since construction is always less spectacular than destruction, the Alemán program of consolidating and building on the revolutionary gains seems to many a definite lag in the Revolution, if not its termination. This of course is not true, for the Revolution has merely settled down for the long pull. No new spectacular spurts are expected; no new radical departures, for all the energy which might go into further reforms will be used to fulfill present commitments. "Mexico still is run by a revolution. A cabinet leader in gentleman-rider red may be taking the jumps in Chapultepec Park for regular exercise but his principles are as devoted to the 1910-1920 revolution as if he still looked like Pancho Villa's dusty

<sup>41</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, April 28, 1950.

<sup>42</sup> Mexico's population increased from 19.4 million in 1940 to 26 million in 1950. It registers one of the highest indices of natural increase in the world. The increase of population is testimony of the success of Mexico's health and sanitary program.

<sup>43</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, April 28, 1950.

lieutenant."<sup>44</sup> Although Mexico's leftist revolution has turned toward the middle of the road, it is still a continuing revolution.

### V. *The Balance Sheet of Revolution*

While frankly conceding the difficulties attending the posting of a balance sheet of revolution, this task is greatly relieved in the present instance because of the advantages of perspective which we enjoy at mid-century forty years after the initiation of the Madero revolt. Sufficient time has elapsed to allow a certain crystallization process to set in, so that evidences of success or failure of revolutionary objectives are readily available for examination. However, from this ample supply of data which should be entered on both sides of the ledger, only a few carefully selected items can be mentioned, because of limitations imposed on this present survey.

Apparently the Revolution's greatest gains have been in the material realm. Mexico is today riding the wave of unprecedented prosperity. A veritable boom is sweeping the country. Over the past ten years the national income has quadrupled, rising from 6 billion pesos in 1939 to 25.6 billion pesos in 1949, or approximately 2.9 billion dollars.<sup>45</sup> While conceding that much of this increase is in inflated pesos, still it is largely the consequence of increased industrial and agricultural production. It seems that Mexico's new industry, which is of course a creature of the Revolution, is paying off.<sup>46</sup> In evidence of the present strong fiscal status of the country, there has been built up a dollar surplus of over 200 million dollars. This seems to be vindication of the drastic governmental action of June, 1949, when the peso was devalued to 8 65 to the United States dollar.

Yet, to offset this picture of apparent prosperity and revolutionary success in raising living standards,<sup>47</sup> it should be noted that

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, April 21, 1950.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations, *Statistical Year Book: 1949*.

<sup>46</sup> Production showed an advance of 100 per cent from 1945 to 1950. *Revista de Estadística* (July, 1950), p. 288.

<sup>47</sup> To refute the contention that industrial development has been at the cost of the living level of the people, the per capita consumption of food staples has made a substantial increase from 1938 to 1948. *Revista de Economía* (Sept., 1950), p. 367.

these economic benefits are restricted. It is estimated that 85 per cent of the Mexicans still live on a bare subsistence level. They comprise the mass of the rural population, and, since they sell little to and buy little from the world beyond the confines of their communities, they are really outside the national economy. Thus, the so-called "prosperity wave" benefits only a relatively few Mexicans, principally residents of the larger cities.

This does not imply that the Revolution has contributed nothing to the rural population of Mexico, for one of its undoubted achievements has been the gradual, sporadic, but substantial redistribution of land. The old semi-feudal system of proprietorship with the workers in a condition of serfdom has been abolished. Most of the haciendas have been divided, thus making possible the approximate realization of the constitutional aim of the small holding. Great progress has been made in giving land to the landless. However, the agrarian program has not economically justified the hopes of its sponsors. There are still thousands of *campesinos* without lands; for them the problem is unresolved. As for the *ejidatarios*, the land was split up into too small units, making primitive subsistence agriculture inevitable. Thus, the ejidal system makes little contribution to the feeding of urban Mexico. The problem of increasing agricultural production is aggravated by the fact that many of the larger landowners have hesitated to lay out capital on their remaining properties for fear that after the improvements have been made their lands may be expropriated and thus the capital lost. President Obregón said, "The day when every Mexican has a piece of land all revolutions here will be over." Although this objective has fallen short of realization, still its moderate achievement in Mexico should serve as a minor contribution to the preservation of order and stability in that country.

Has the Revolution contributed more to the well-being of the urban worker than to the *campesino*? It is impossible to say, because of the great variations in living standards one finds in both groups. However, the Revolution has contributed much to Mexican labor. It has fostered and protected labor organization, improved labor conditions, provided a social welfare program, and increased the worker's dignity and self-respect. It has also facilitated the participation of unions in national affairs, because of the strength inherent in an organized minority. Despite the fact that or-

ganized Mexican labor has always been a sort of unofficial instrument of the government, and therefore lacks independence, it is equally true that this has been a relationship of great mutual advantage.

Undoubtedly, it is in the field of education that the Revolution has scored one of its greatest triumphs. The statistics of federal appropriations for education, the number of schools established, and the number of scholastics, all bear eloquent testimony to the determination of the Mexican nation to convert into reality the revolutionary motto, "To educate is to redeem."

Of course it is true that millions of adult Mexicans still await redemption from illiteracy. Of course the legal mandate "free, secular, and compulsory education," means little to the tens of thousands of Mexican children for whom no school facilities exist. Of course revolutionary Mexico has a long way to go to achieve its educational goal. But, consider the great distance traveled. Not failures, but achievements, with due regard to meager financial resources, should be the measure of Mexico's educational progress. Nor should the success of the schools be gauged by the percentage of reduction made in the great illiterate population, for the broad educational program, particularly that of the rural schools, stresses instruction, for adults as well as children, in health and sanitation, household arts, agriculture, and social living. An objective is that the rural population should "modify its rudimentary manner of domestic, social, and economic life rather than that it should learn to read and write."<sup>48</sup>

Substantial as have been the achievements under Mexico's educational program, the task remains unfinished. Yet, whereas "only a tentative success can be attributed to the nation's program of cultural rehabilitation . . . the educational undertaking is proceeding along lines which should lead to success and bring the blessings of cultural well-being to her people."<sup>49</sup>

It is to be noted, however, that education has not succeeded in integrating the Indians into the Mexican nation. According to Vasconcelos, it was the duty of education to bring the Indians into the world of Hispanic-American life. The founder of the Revolu-

<sup>48</sup> Sanchez, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

<sup>49</sup> George I. Sanchez, "Education," in Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

tion's educational program looked forward to the assimilation of local cultures into a national civilization. To him the "Indian problem" of Mexico was that of converting the many little folk societies into a nation. Later this policy was changed to one of greater tolerance of native culture, but still it was the educational objective to establish a compromise between the native and modern worlds.<sup>50</sup>

Although the Indian was rediscovered as a symbol of national life, and the "cult of the Indian" (dances, songs, folk arts) became the rage, the Indian has not been integrated into the nation. "The effectiveness of schools and other civilizing agencies is," says Professor Redfield, "on the whole, in inverse proportion to the isolation of the area; the parts of Mexico most slowly reached are strongly Indian regions."<sup>51</sup> The great lack of unity persists at the present time. "Mexico, especially Indian Mexico, is a collection of still largely separate societies," continues Dr. Redfield. "There can be no complete nation until there is a national sense, and such a sense is far from present in the multitude of little valley or mountain villages, or clusters of villages, each with its own customs, loyalties, and even dialect."<sup>52</sup>

Despite the foregoing, nationalism is one of the great contributions of the Revolution. It manifests itself in legislation denying to foreigners the means of exercising economic dominance in the nation, and in requiring of resident aliens respect for Mexican sovereignty. It also manifests itself by a united front of all Mexicans whenever there is a threat of foreign economic control, as, for example, when the oil properties were expropriated in 1938. But as has already been noted, in connection with Mexico's need of foreign capital, the limitations imposed on investments by a sensitive nationalistic sentiment frighten the potential investor, and, as a consequence, Mexico's economic development is retarded. Only when this nationalistic suspicion is abated can Mexico hope to attract the assistance which she so greatly needs.

It is paradoxical that of the various revolutionary objectives, the one first declared, that is, democratic government, is still

<sup>50</sup> Robert Redfield, "The Indian in Mexico," in Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

farthest from its goal. The Madero demand for "effective suffrage" meant nothing less than popular, representative government. "No re-election" was incidental; it was merely a safeguard of popular government. "No re-election" was written into the Federal Constitution, and although it was amended to facilitate the re-election of Obregón, it was later amended anew to prohibit a presidential term in excess of six years. This same principle has been applied, most illogically, to Federal Deputies and Senators; also state governors, legislators, and even municipal officials. The elimination of re-election from Mexican political practice has meant no increase of popular government, because of the imposing of successors. This well-known Latin American practice is called *imposición*.

In 1930, during the *Maximato*, Luis Cabrera wrote, "At present one can use the phrase 'effective suffrage' in Mexico only as a euphemism."<sup>53</sup> It is not believed that he would alter his view today. In 1930 it was the official party, the P.N.R., which monopolized political office; today it is the official party, now called the P.R.I., which crushes all political opposition. It is not a one-party system, as in the Soviet Union, where no opposition is tolerated. In Mexico, opposition parties, like the Partido Acción Nacional (P.A.N.) and the Partido Popular (P.P.), are allowed to nominate candidates and campaign vigorously. There is little coercion at the polls and the voting is generally orderly. However, all the foregoing is stage-play, for the elections are decided by those who count the votes. These local officials are named by the P.R.I.—the controlled Federal Commission for Supervising Elections.<sup>54</sup> The outcome of elections can always be predicted with confidence; no need of a Gallup Poll in Mexico, where the election results are determined by the government and not by the people. Where there is no political opposition, there can be little democracy.

Space does not allow for a discussion of the failure of constitutional safeguards, such as division of powers and checks and balances, to prevent the establishment of a dictatorship of the Executive Power. A well-known Mexican official has written that

<sup>53</sup> Luis Cabrera, "The Balance Sheet of the Revolution," in *The Nation* (Dec. 31, 1930), p. 744

<sup>54</sup> Austin F. Macdonald, *Latin American Politics and Government* (New York, 1949), p. 250.



"the President of Mexico can rule Congress and put under his foot the Supreme Court of Justice."<sup>55</sup> This being the case, what can be the status of *political* democracy in Mexico?

Not only has the Revolution failed to make much progress in the direction of effective democracy, but it has failed to raise the level of political morality. This seems to be the judgment of commentators, both friendly and unfriendly to the Revolution. They agree that corruption is prevalent in high and low places. Numerous public functionaries acquire fortunes in a few months without loss of respectability. As Luis Cabrera writes, "The fact of a person in authority having rapidly accumulated a fortune through speculation or fraud is regarded as merely indicating on his part a meritorious provision for his future welfare."<sup>56</sup> Public apathy to this situation is regarded by Silva Herzog as the greatest danger. Professor Tannenbaum is also cognizant of this situation. In his recent book on Mexico he writes: "The decline in the personal integrity so essential to the new responsibilities thrown upon both government and private enterprise . . . is the greatest single moral failure of the Mexican Revolution. Insofar as the Mexican Revolution has failed to instill a sufficient sense of responsibility in the new generation it can be said to have encrusted it with a moral disease that may prove its ruin."<sup>57</sup> Evidently the Revolution has not changed the age-old Mexican conception of public office as a perquisite, rather than a trust.

The ledger has been posted. What is the balance? According to Cosío Villegas, "The justification of the Mexican Revolution, like all revolutions, all movements that subvert the established order, cannot be said to be other than the conviction of its necessity, that is to say, that without it the country would be in a worse or little better condition."<sup>58</sup> Truly, without the Revolution, Mexico would be infinitely worse off. That is our credit balance.

<sup>55</sup> Ramón Beteta, "The Government of Mexico," in *Lectures Before the Inter-American Institute* (Claremont, California, 1929), p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Cabrera, *op. cit.*, p. 746.

<sup>57</sup> Tannenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>58</sup> Cosío Villegas, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Lewis Hanke:<sup>1</sup> CARIBBEAN BIBLIOGRAPHY

PERHAPS the first question that I ought to raise is: Does such a thing as Caribbean bibliography exist? Is not bibliography's pulse so weak and intermittent in this great area that, practically speaking, it does not beat at all? And even if it did exist, does such a supposedly academic and lifeless activity as bibliography have any real connection with the stated subject for discussion at this round-table session: "Political and Historical Problems of the Caribbean Area"?

Let me set your minds at rest immediately by assuring you that the very weakness and thus unsatisfactory condition of bibliography in the Caribbean is a sound justification for giving it our attention at this time. While we should begin by recognizing that bibliographic work has long been undertaken in the area under discussion, we must also realize that it should and can be improved and that those concerned with the pressing political and social developments in the Caribbean neglect it at their peril. And everything that can be said on bibliography applies with even greater force to documentation—which is an impressive word that has been coined to describe the printed and other material produced on and about a given topic or man or area.

I will not attempt to give you a definition of bibliography. Heated and learned discussions almost always take place on this subject whenever librarians and bibliographers get together to

<sup>1</sup> Maury A. Bromsen, Marietta Daniels, and Arthur E. Gropp of the Pan American Union have given the writer useful suggestions on this paper, as has David K. Easton of the Caribbean Commission.

wash their own linen. Even the committee of experts convened by Unesco last month in Paris from the far corners of the world did not tackle this problem. This International Conference on the Improvement of Bibliographical Services had a two-volume Unesco-Library of Congress Bibliographical Survey Report at hand to serve as the basis for discussion, but the experts on bibliography started out by refusing to resolve the definition of the word "bibliography." We know, however, the way in which bibliography manifests itself, in the same way that doctors recognize diseases by their symptoms even when they do not know exactly what the disease is or what causes it.

First of all there is national bibliography, a listing of the publications issued during a given year in a particular country. The Unesco conference last month paid careful attention to national bibliographies, or the lack of them, and resolved to recommend that the Director General of Unesco arrange for the compilation of a handbook on the preparation of national bibliographies.

This handbook should receive widespread distribution in Caribbean countries. It is true that in Cuba Dr. Fermín Peraza, of the Municipal Library of Havana, produces an *Anuario Bibliográfico Cubano* with an astonishing punctuality which can be rivalled only by the punctuality with which bullfights begin. And Dr. Luis Florén has developed a national bibliography in the Dominican Republic, and Dr. Pedro Grases and Dr. Julián Amo have made important contributions in Venezuela and Mexico, respectively. Other devoted bibliographers are at work in the Caribbean.<sup>2</sup> But the fact remains that few countries produce national bibliographies with any regularity and those that are published sometimes leave much to be desired.

A special variety of national bibliography is the retrospective, the attempt to record everything printed in a country. This is a noble task which often ends in failure. The nobility of the task is increased when the bibliographer tries to include as well everything published outside the country pertaining to the country, as does Dr. Max Bissainthe, director of the National Library of Haiti, in

<sup>2</sup> The *Boletín Bibliográfico* of the National Library of Costa Rica, the "Bibliografía Salvadoreña" of the *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional* of El Salvador, and the *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional* of Guatemala should all be considered here.

a large work he has just completed after some nine years' labor. His *Dictionnaire de Bibliographie Haitienne* includes an alphabetical author list of more than 8,500 titles of works written by Haitians, published in Haiti or about Haiti. Alphabetical title and subject indexes have been prepared as well as biographical notes on the authors, based upon material in the Haitian National Archives. Each title listed is described in full bibliographical detail, and critical notes indicate the significance of items of special importance. Copies are located in libraries in London, Paris, Port-au-Prince, and Washington.

Now that Dr. Bissainthe has achieved such a heroic accomplishment, he still has the problem of how to get this 900-page, double-columned work published. Bibliography lacks glamour, it seems, and no millionaire has yet come forward to take care of it though all scholars and all libraries and all governments depend to an increasing extent on this handmaiden that is, in truth, indispensable to them.

Retrospective bibliographies such as the Bissainthe contribution are often, perhaps usually, prepared because of the concern felt by some individual. National bibliographies, or rather the need for them, is more generally recognized. Yet national bibliographies are not enough, for they are limited to listing and describing publications without evaluating their contents. It is obvious that no one can guide himself through the forest, or rather jungle, of publications currently falling from the presses on the Caribbean. In years past some have felt that once a book was listed and bibliographically described the bibliographer had done his duty. The eighteenth-century English essayist Joseph Addison termed the bibliographer who felt that description was enough, "Tom Folio, the broker in learning." Of Tom Folio, Addison wrote: "There is not a catalogue printed that doth not come to him wet from the press. He is a universal scholar, so far as the title page of all authors. He thinks he gives you an account of an author, when he tells you the subject he treats of, the name of the editor, and the year in which it was printed. Or, if you draw him into further particulars, he cries up the goodness of the paper, extols the diligence of the corrector, and is transported with the beauty of the letter. This he looks upon to be sound learning and substantial criticism."

Much more needs to be done if bibliography is to serve as an instrument of communication between peoples. We must have selective bibliography. We need to know what particular publications are useful for and which ones currently being spewed forth by the presses are the most important ones. This need has been recognized in the Americas, at least, because the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held at Buenos Aires in 1936 recommended that each American republic should issue a "quarterly bulletin, giving notice of recently published books of a scientific, historical, literary, or artistic nature, to be distributed and exchanged among the republics by suitable government exchange agencies." So far as I know not a single Caribbean country has followed this recommendation. Yet how necessary it is for the Caribbean countries particularly to produce such bibliographies on the order of the *United States Quarterly Book Review*. To the outside world Caribbean countries are all too often considered as merely exotic lands. Or they are described as principally a mass of pressing economic and social problems—a sort of "slum and rum" approach in which revolution and romance are mixed too.

Now of course bibliography, even selective bibliography, is not the answer to all the problems of life. But a carefully described selection of current publications being issued in Caribbean countries, and about them outside the Caribbean, would give a far more accurate and balanced view of the present status of the Caribbean, its problems and its prospects.

How are such bibliographies produced? Since the beginning of time, I suspect that the two fundamental ingredients have been heroes and/or institutions. Behind every great bibliographical enterprise stands a man who has both the conviction that the task is worth doing and the energy and persistence to do it. Witness the phenomenal achievement of José Toribio Medina of Chile and the roster of other bibliographers in the Americas.<sup>3</sup> Today lone

<sup>3</sup> Augusto Bird, Frank Cundall, Antonio S. Pedreira, and Carlos Manuel Trelles y Govín are some of the workers in the Caribbean bibliographical vineyard. The only general survey volume is Arthur E. Gropp's *Guide to Libraries and Archives in Central America and the West Indies, Panamá, Bermuda, and British Guiana* . . . (New Orleans, 1941). C. K. Jones, *A Bibliography of Latin American Bibliographies*, revised edition (Washington, 1942), records many other useful works.

bibliographers are difficult to find, for usually they are and indeed must be attached to some institution. Not only must bibliographers and their families eat, but publications are so numerous that only institutions can acquire and maintain the collections of material necessary for the practice of bibliography. The *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, for example, could be prepared only in the Library of Congress. The contributing editors change, and the volume may shift publishers. In fact, the University of Florida Press has taken over the responsibility for the *Handbook* from Harvard University Press with Volume 14, to appear in 1951. But no other library in the United States or elsewhere receives enough current publications regularly on Latin America to satisfy *Handbook* needs. Even so, the Library of Congress calls regularly on the Pan American Union Library for necessary assistance.

A similar situation, on a different scale, exists in every country in the Caribbean. If no institution is to be found which receives the majority of the publications of a given country, it must be established before bibliography can flourish there. At this point we must hope that the governments concerned come to recognize their need for accurate, up-to-date information on the economic, political, and social problems with which they are struggling.

A good example of the special complexity and urgency of the bibliographic need in the Caribbean may be observed in the current efforts of Mr. David K. Easton, librarian of the Caribbean Commission, to establish a current bibliography of publications issued in the Caribbean territories under the jurisdiction of France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States, and of publications issued in the metropolitan countries concerning their respective areas. Here is a splendid opportunity for effective co-operation between governments for mutual benefit, and the elements for such an undertaking appear to be available. Señor Gonzalo Velázquez, of the University of Puerto Rico Library, has recently published the first *Anuario Bibliográfico Puertorriqueño* devoted to 1948 items. The University of the West Indies in Jamaica has been established with an active librarian, while potential bibliographers for the publications of French, Dutch, and other British territory are to be found widely dispersed in the Caribbean. Mr. Easton proposes to animate and correlate the work of these colleagues to the end that there will be published quarterly by the

Caribbean Commission a "Current Caribbean Bibliography" to cover the official and private publications of the non-self-governing territories of the four countries. The result should be a valuable instrument of use to everyone concerned with Caribbean problems and a project which should receive hearty support from all such meetings as the present conference.

It is noteworthy that this effort will have to be made on an international basis, which is only proper and to be expected inasmuch as the Caribbean has been the scene of international rivalry, indeed a sort of cockpit of the Americas, since the days of Columbus. And notice, too, that individuals connected with institutions will constitute the backbone of the staff to produce the bibliography.

One may conclude, too, that bibliography thrives wherever there are trained librarians. It is a cause for real satisfaction, therefore, that the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País of Havana has just started a library school which in due course will affect favorably the development of Caribbean bibliography.

United States institutions can and should participate in this work by making better known their material on the Caribbean.<sup>4</sup> Our collections are rich but dispersed, and sustained efforts must be made to see that these materials are brought to light and guides published.

The Library of Congress perhaps could assist the development of bibliographical centers in the Caribbean by offering to send, as a part of our exchange service, printed catalog cards of all items currently catalogued relating to the country where the bibliographical center is located. In return, each center would send the Library of Congress, and would presumably print for general distribution, a list of publications currently issued in its own territory.

Another influence toward the development of adequate bibliographical instruments in the Caribbean might be the Organization of American States. Its library, The Columbus Memorial Library, has long worked in the field and has a knowledgeable staff. Both the director, Mr. Arthur E. Gropp, and the associate director,

<sup>4</sup> Some work has already been accomplished toward this end, such as the *List of Works Relating to the West Indies*, published by the New York Public Library in 1912, and *The Memorias of the Republics of Central America and of the Antilles*, compiled by James B Childs and issued by The Library of Congress in 1932.

Miss Marietta Daniels, have had long, first-hand experience in Latin America. Just recently the *Review of Inter-American Bibliography* has been launched under the energetic leadership of Mr. Maury A. Bromsen, which should have a useful influence in stimulating bibliography throughout Latin America, including the Caribbean.

This brief review of some of the recent developments will explain my feeling that Caribbean bibliography exists and has a future. Indeed, it must have a future if we are to study adequately such important topics as the Mexican Revolution. Professor Mecham is scheduled to give an appraisal of that vast movement, but how can he do so until the widely scattered bibliography on it is under better control? Or until more of the sources for its study are published?

Now turning to documentation, I shall have time to refer to only two parts of this large subject, periodicals and manuscripts. Periodicals constitute one of the principal sources for the history of the Caribbean, but collections are difficult to find, and when found are usually spotty—at least in the United States. Has the time not arrived for some institution—perhaps the University of Florida Library will wish to exercise leadership in this area—to build a microfilm collection of complete runs of such outstanding newspapers as the *Diario de la Marina* and *El Mundo* of Havana, to mention only two? Here again is an opportunity for international cooperation inasmuch as some Cuban institutions might be found to share the glory, and the expense, of such an undertaking. The *Union List of Latin American Newspapers in United States Libraries* now being compiled at the Columbus Library under the direction of Mr. Gropp will reveal how weak our collections are and at the same time provide a factual basis to guide a microfilming project of this kind.

Manuscripts present a somewhat different and more difficult problem. Archives in the Caribbean area have suffered more than most from the usual hazards—fire, weather, war, and man—and, in addition, many of the essential manuscripts are to be found in European and other repositories. This has been in some respects a fortunate circumstance, for many records still exist. Professor Arturo Morales Carrión and others in Puerto Rico are studying the possibility of recreating an archive on Puerto Rico by microfilming



relevant material in the archives of Spain, England, France, Cuba, Mexico, the United States, and other countries. First of all, however, we need to know more about the manuscript records in the Caribbean and elsewhere relating to the Caribbean. The Committee on Archives of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, with headquarters in Cuba and under the chairmanship of Dr. Emeterio Santovenia, might be the ideal group to conduct this investigation and make recommendations for future action.

What, in conclusion, I feel must be stressed is that in all our work on Caribbean bibliography and documentation, effective co-operation is required both on a national and an international scale.



*Part VI*

*LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF  
THE CARIBBEAN AREA*



Jorge Mañach: LITERARY HOMOGENEITY  
 IN THE CARIBBEAN

THIS is a Round Table on "Language and Literature of the Caribbean Area" held at an American university which is concerned with an appraisal of society and culture at mid-century in a section of Latin America. It is a generous and far-seeing interest indeed, for which we on the other side of the Río Grande cannot be too appreciative. This particular Conference deals with the Caribbean area, which we are defining as Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, the Island Republics and other parts of the West Indies. I presume this region in and about the Gulf of Mexico has been chosen, perhaps as a part of a wider program, primarily because of its geographical immediacy.

But the generalization implied when we say "The Caribbean" invites inquiry as to whether there is what we might call a common denominator in this region, beyond the purely geographical one. Certainly, the designation has always been considered primarily geographical. The question is: May it be extended to include living culture as well, and especially literature? Or, to put it more concretely, is there anything that gives unity, or at least a regional homogeneity, to the literatures of the several countries already mentioned, beyond the basic fact that they are in Spanish and by peoples of the Hispanic-American tradition? Only if there is such unity, would our concentration not be arbitrary or superficial.

Now I am venturing the opinion that there is such a regional affinity. For one thing, other Latin Americans seem to detect it. It is no mystery that, in the southernmost republics of our conti-

nent, which have attained a greater maturity than most of their northern sisters, these Caribbean countries are often referred to with a certain—shall we say—aloofness? They do not seem to consider us merely less developed, but different in quality, made, as it were, of different ingredients.

Again, when those Latin Americans of the far south wish to describe our attitudes and general modes of expression, they use the word “tropical,” meaning, of course, a certain tendency to exuberance and excessive warmth. You remember that the late Pedro Henríquez Ureña—a very cool mind from a quite tropical island—once had to argue, in our defense, that “tropicalism” in that bad sense is no peculiarity of ours, while in a better sense “tropical” could be employed to describe much of the world’s best literature, beginning with the Old Testament.

But an affinity there is in the literatures of these countries, and climate does seem to have something to do with it. Writing about a Venezuelan author, the Cuban, José Martí, praised with a sense of kinship his *lengua de tierra caliente*—the style of the warm lands, colorful and abundant. The writers of the Mexican tableland, beginning with the classic Ruiz de Alarcón, as Henríquez Ureña also showed, have a certain coolness and restraint about them which one would rarely find in the writers of Veracruz or Tampico.

This reminds us that the Caribbean area is not all flat and warm. If a homogeneity exists, as I believe, there must be other factors that account for it. Professor Crow speaks of “an interpretation of Caribbean society through literature.” Maybe we should try also to interpret Caribbean literature through its society. Northern Latin Americans are mixed in a different way from those of the south—on a more primitive level, so to speak. The Indian strain is more actual and active in most of our countries; so is, in certain parts, the Negro. At the same time, except for Peru and Ecuador, the Spanish imprint on us seems to have gone deeper, and we have had a lesser admixture of other Europeans. Our language, customs, and culture are truer to the primitive mold.

If our societies are less integrated, so are our economies. In most of these countries, nature is still a challenge, not a servant. We are closer to that Third Day of Creation of which Count Keyserling spoke, although he was referring to South America. It is no ac-

cident that the new Spanish American novel, which poses precisely that conflict between man and land, had its prototypes in Colombia and Venezuela. Politically, our countries have also been slower in their process of democratic integration. Some of them still have vast human masses indifferent to democratic values. Curiously enough, that accounts at the same time for a survival of romantic liberalism and an early emergence in us of collectivistic ideas. They both nurture a persistence of what we might call "the revolutionary spirit."

All these factors, then, have produced in the region we are designating as "the Caribbean" a literature which bears certain common features, different from those of the southernmost countries. It is, indeed, "warmer," both in attitude and expression—emotional even when it is intellectual, and tending to emphasis rather than to understatement. Its subject matter is wont to be more primary, yet, by the same token, it also seems to be more directly and generously "human," less sophisticated or purely contemplative. In various ways it is a didactic or a fighting literature. Though more nationalistic and less cosmopolitan than that of the south, it shows less arrogance and dreams a more universal dream. A mild Don Quixote still abides with us. French influence, as with Rubén Darío or Silva, has not displaced a millenary sadness on which Romanticism was grafted, nor a certain austere yearning of our soul for its own moral roots in Spanish stoicism. Our language also tends to be more classical. Finally, it seems to me that our literature exhibits in a more marked way that "aesthetic accent" which has been recognized as the distinguishing characteristic of the Latin American mind—"aesthetic" in the double sense of the word: dependence on sensibility, and delight in form.

This it is, I believe, that entitles us to speak about the literature of the Caribbean Area with some degree of congruity. And if those characteristics are, as I think they are, precisely the ones that we usually ascribe to the whole of Latin American expression, maybe we are justified in going further and saying that our "Caribbean" literature is not only "tropical," but "typical," and that it is through it that we shall best reach the substance of Hispanic-American culture.

John Armstrong Crow: AN INTERPRETATION OF  
CARIBBEAN SOCIETY THROUGH LITERATURE

**H**ISTORY is the story of peoples as they are viewed through the happenings of the past. In a broader sense history attempts to interpret the progress and perspective of nations and of civilizations. The historic view is objective—from the outside; it draws into highlight what has taken place during a given epoch.

Literature, on the other hand, lays bare the inside view. Its emphasis is on the inner workings of the mind, on human feelings, on the how and why of behavior and of desire which lead men in this direction or that. Events are important in literature only in their function of affecting character. The writer of literature is always subjective and is interested primarily in a spiritual quality, which he seeks to bring out by analysis of character and a presentation of events, real or imaginary, that embody at least one and, oftentimes, many spiritual qualities of his people. He never views these things as an outsider, but always as one who is an integral part of the picture. It is as if from a great painting or a cathedral a figure caught in oils or in stained glass stepped down from window or canvas and told us why he was there, and how he felt, and who were the people around him. His words might not express the whole truth, but they would express his truth. Every epoch of every nation, linguistic, racial, or geographic group is characterized by a pervading dream or spirit, more important than the events of the times.

History often misses this spirit or fails to make it come alive for the reader. Literature seldom does. The literary author is both



psychologist and artist. He lays before us the oneness of life, and the differences of peoples. He points out the universal through a window that is national. He pictures the psychology and spirit of a people, that complexity of national character without a knowledge of which it is as useless to study history, interpret art, accumulate economic statistics, or analyze actions, as it would be to attempt to communicate with a man without knowing his language.

Literature is the language of a nation elevated to its highest power and made intelligible to others. Literature is what people think of themselves. The literature of the Caribbean, nurtured by sunshine and blue waters, touched by the dissolvent of race and of religion, plagued by the nausea of greed and the germs of poverty, the inflexibility of the few and the fanaticism of the many, the flash of machetes and the chimera of democracy, at every turn reflects the personality and character of those who created it.

Before the white man came it is said that the Indians of some parts of America possessed a literature, mostly of oral traditions, but in some instances inscribed hieroglyphically by priests or elders. But literature in our sense of the term the Indian did not know. The Incas had no written language, and the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs, oftentimes very beautiful, were hardly a suitable medium for literary expression. Only the priests knew the written language, and it was used to perpetuate their cult. It was not used to plumb the depths of character, exalt the emotions, interpret life; it did not cry out the dream and the difference which make up the spiritual substance of a people. It was tribal folklore and it was religion, but it did not reach the level of literature.

When the Spaniards came to the New World they changed all this. During the century that followed the discovery, Spain was at the peak of her power. In the year 1492, after a struggle of centuries, her victorious armies entered Granada and put an end to Moorish dominion. It was a dual triumph: for Church, and State. In that same year the Spanish Jews, another large minority group, were exiled, a Spaniard was appointed Pope, America was discovered, and Antonio de Nebrija, a Spaniard, published the first grammar of a Romance tongue. In the preface to this book he pointed out that language was the ideal weapon of empire.

Spain of the tenth century and Spain of the twentieth century would have been equally impotent to carry out the discovery and conquest of the New World. "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." Spain rode the crest of her flood, and through the zeal of crusading priest and soldier imposed her language, her religion, her economy, and many of the trappings of her society and culture upon the barbarians of America. From that time on, whatever literature was written in these lands which she had conquered would be in Spanish.

The Indian has had his spokesman, his defenders, his vilifiers, his interpreters, and in recent years there have been pure Indian writers of note. But their education was not Indian. No writer has seen the Indian from the inside, as he sees himself, and none has bewailed the conquest which was his crucifixion, wherein the great native cultures were overwhelmed, arrested, aborted in their development which, undisturbed, might have led, who knows where?

Columbus began the literature of the Caribbean in 1493 when he sent back to Spain his famous letter on the discovery. In this letter he wrote rhapsodically of the New World. "It is a land to be desired," he said, "and once seen never to be abandoned." The earth was full of tall trees of a thousand kinds, and alive with singing birds. Everywhere was greenness, fertility, a prodigal nature and the breath of spring. Of the natives he wrote: "They are so guileless and generous with all they have, that no one would believe it who has not seen it. Of anything that they possess, if it be asked of them, they never say no. On the contrary, they invite you to share it and show as much love as if their hearts went with it." And in the *Journal of the Discovery*, he wrote down: "I assure Your Majesties that there is no better land or people. They love their neighbors as themselves, and their speech is the sweetest in the world, and gentle, and always with a smile."

The priest Peter Martyr, who gave further currency to this idyllic picture in his *De Orbe Novo*, the first part of which came out in 1511, wrote of the Indians as follows: "Among them the land belongs to all, as the sun and the water, and the words mine and thine (the seeds of all mischief) have no place among them. So that if we shall not be ashamed to confess the truth, they seem

to live in that golden world of which old writers speak so much: wherein men lived simply and innocently without enforcement of laws, without quarreling judges and libels, content only to satisfy nature, without further vexation for knowledge of things to come."

To the earth-hungry eyes of those ancient mariners of the Old World here indeed was a new domain—strange, exotic, alluring, a tropical Eden of the heart's desire. When Columbus touched the coast of Cuba he exclaimed that it was the most beautiful land ever beheld by human eyes, and when he skirted the northern fringe of South America on his third voyage he wrote back to the King and Queen that he had discovered the Terrestrial Paradise. The earth was shaped like a pear, he wrote, or like a round ball, on one part of which is placed something like a woman's breast. This part, he said, which was nearest Heaven, was where the Earthly Paradise was located<sup>1</sup> And so the Caribbean became mother to the first myth that lured men to its bosom.

For the intellectuals of Europe here was a dream come true. To them it seemed that Columbus had stepped back in history several millennia and discovered a people "living in the Golden Age, that bright morning of humanity which existed only in the imaginations of poets."<sup>1</sup> It was the birth of this legend which began the literature of the Caribbean, and of the New World.

Thomas More, in his *Utopia* (1516), chose as the Gulliver of his book an imaginary companion of Vespucci, who visited the fictional isle where life was happy and free; and Campanella, in his *City of the Sun* (1623), portrays another beautiful and nebulous land which he places in the tropics where the aspects of life evoke memories of Inca and Mexican society. Francis Bacon took a page from Plato and called his Utopia *The New Atlantis*, but even he did not escape the influence of the legend, for the inhabitants of his imaginary domain were made to speak Spanish. The Utopian ideal, one of the most beautiful creations of Greek genius, was thus given a new birth and flowered again in the Renaissance.

But this was not the only legend of the Caribbean. Two other wild dreams of more immediate moment drove men across snarling seas and trackless jungle during those epic years: the mythical fountain of youth, and the strange dream of El Dorado. Ponce de León laid the basis of the first when he touched the coast of this state of Florida in the year 1513 on the day known in Spanish as

*La pascua florida*. He came in search of a will-o'-the-wisp, beloved of all men, which he called the Fountain of Eternal Youth. On southern Caribbean shores another myth was born: that of the primitive King of El Dorado who anointed himself with oil and gold dust until his body glittered in the sun before his ritual of plunging into the waters of a distant lake. So strong did these two myths become that for many years the land mass of North America was known as La Florida, and South America appeared on many maps as El Dorado. The hope of eternal youth and easy wealth became a state of mind as essential to the conquest of the New World as the courage of Spanish priest and conquistador.

Gentle and smiling Indians, fertile lands, Utopia, El Dorado, and the Caribbean brought to man's attention the philosophic opposition between nature and civilization. Was not natural man perhaps more happy, a better and more enlightened being, than civilized man? This central theme was repeated dozens of times in the literature which followed the discovery of the New World, reaching its high-water mark in Montaigne and Rousseau. The English Dryden added his bit in *The Conquest of Granada* (1670), in which he invented the phrase "noble savage" since made famous by the Romanticists.<sup>2</sup>

Montaigne in his essay "On Cannibals" describes primitive life in the New World, stating that the Indians have "no name of magistrates nor of political superiority . . . The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulations, covetousness, envy, detraction, and forgiveness were never heard of among them."<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Swift repeated this, characterizing his Utopian Houyhnhnms in much the same manner, and Shakespeare parallels Montaigne's words in describing Gonzalo's Utopian commonwealth in *The Tempest*. The idea is further developed by Montaigne in his essay "On Carriages," in which he refers to the New World as "the richest, the fairest and the best part of the world, topsiturned, ruined and defaced for the traffic of pearls and pepper. O mechanical victories, O base conquest!" He then proceeds to put the New World cultures on a level with those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and winds up saying: "This late world shall but come to light when ours shall fall in darkness."

Rousseau's ideal man is not the savage, but is man brought up in harmony with the dictates of nature. Man is born free, says

Rousseau. If he gives up some of his natural and primitive independence, it is through an act of his will. The State, therefore, rests upon an arbitrary convention. The only binding and true laws are those sanctioned by the collection of individual wills. This is the social contract between individual man and society. Man also is naturally good. It is education that depraves him, substituting for this natural goodness the evolved vices of society. Everything must be invented: customs, science, arts, religion, through the expansion of this spirit of man's freedom and the natural spontaneity of his soul. The development and repetition of this theme led to romanticism in literature and in the arts, and in society to political and social revolution. The dream is far from dead in the twentieth century.

D. H. Lawrence in *The Plumed Serpent* presents as his "natural man" a visionary Indian who attempts to revive the spirit of pre-conquest Mexican culture.<sup>2</sup> Utopia dies hard in the minds of men, whose physical bodies seem ever subject to the vicissitudes of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse: famine, pestilence, war, and death, always ready to ride herd on the sweetest light that ever cast its glow on civilization.

But perhaps in every illusion there is some seed of truth, however distorted. The truth that brought men by the thousands to the Spanish New World may be condensed in two simple words: gold and slaves. The Spanish conquistador was made to order for this dual purpose, and the conquistador was a product of the Caribbean. Cortés, Balboa, Pizarro, Jiménez de Quesada, and Cabeza de Vaca all began their historic lives in the Caribbean, the stepping-off place and focus of conquest in those early days.

During this first century Caribbean literature consisted of letters written hastily between battles and of chronicles that brought the smell of the campaign onto the printed page. These described in vivid language the epic dash of conquest and the exotic Indian cultures of the New World. One of Cortés' lieutenants, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, wrote a magnificent story of the conquest of Mexico; Father Las Casas, indomitable defender of the Indians, left an outstanding history of the entire area of the Caribbean; Cabeza de Vaca's memoirs trace his amazing peregrination from Florida across the Gulf coast and down into Mexico; the Inca Garcilaso is author of a beautifully written interpretation of Inca

society; and Father Sahagun described life among the ancient Aztecs. Then there were Oviedo, Herrera, Acosta, and literally hundreds of others whose name was legion. They wrote histories as dynamic as the times in which they lived. The Caribbean was the cockpit where the struggle for the New World was being fought out, while the basis of a new society was being laid, by right of conquest, upon the shambles of the old.

From the Caribbean the Spanish conquistador, the superman of his times, exploded in all directions. He was zealous, indefatigable, unconquerable, with a supreme belief in his superior destiny and in the triumph of his cross and sword. He was the paladin of Christ in the land of the infidels. His song was "Onward Christian Soldiers," but in his heart there was that love of gold which all men covet, and that desire for slaves so essential to the accumulation of treasure and the cultivation of the fecund soil.

The needs of these men were hardly more than those of soldiers. Their cities were armed camps fringing the wilderness. They plunged into the unknown, reckless of all consequences. They were the makers of history, and the carriers of religion, the creators of life.

In the new society that emerged there were only two classes: overlords and slaves, the Spaniard who ruled and the Indian who obeyed. Utopia had given way to dictatorship, and the white man's will had become the law of the Indians. The conquistadores were soldiers and adventurers, not settlers, and without the aid of hundreds of thousands of Indian slaves their consolidation of the colonial empire would have been impossible.

The Spaniards came without women, and as the early chroniclers all tell us, they immediately took Indian wives or mistresses and mixed their blood profusely with that of the natives. From an apparently rigid two-class society there was emerging a plethora of mestizo children. They were the bridge between the races. As time passed, the destiny of the Caribbean would come to depend more and more upon this new class, which was neither white nor Indian. In those regions where the native population had been practically annihilated because it was unaccustomed to hard labor—the Antilles and the northern coast of South America—Negroes were imported to perform their work, and here the mulatto took the place of the mestizo.

The new society, superimposed upon the old, and in the presence of overweening greed and sex, expressed the Old World strengths in the maelstrom of the New. In this first epic century of the conquest the focus of Western civilization passed from the Mediterranean into the Atlantic. Men of action and enterprise replaced men of birth as leaders in deed and thought.

America was at first an illusion, later a hope, and when the great cities of gold did not materialize, the experience of the conquistadores (worth more than gold itself) made possible the creation of new empires beyond the sea. These men turned their gaze from the classic truths of antiquity toward the future with its promise of a fuller and richer life.

When the dynamic first century of colonial days died away the great period of expansion was at an end. Now came consolidation, retrenchment, and the building of the rich capital cities as the wealth of commerce and of the mines flowed toward these sources of authority and these centers of display. Mexico City, Havana, Cartagena, Guatemala, Bogotá, all danced to the European tune and reflected the European light. "Life in them, silent and monotonous, offered no incentive to literary activity. The colonies were isolated from all foreign influences, and therefore, even more than Spain, stood apart from the intellectual renovation that was affecting the rest of the world."<sup>3</sup> Censorship rigorously limited the entrance of books, and publication in the colonies was even more effectively circumscribed. In the universities, based on medieval Spanish models, philosophy, literature, and all the sciences lived under the perpetual shadow of Theology, the highest paid professorial chair. Colonial society was absorbed in a great hieratic stream.

Every city, town, and hamlet had its church and convent, many of them architectural gems of great loveliness. The Church was the center of town life—physically, religiously, and socially. It towered above the central plaza, into which all streets emptied, as the European cathedrals towered over the medieval villages that surrounded them.

The Church was the builder of schools, the director of education, the mother of art. She provided the professors of the universities, she supervised thought and the printing and reading of books. Going to church was the principal social outlet of the women of

colonial days. They were rarely given an education. The famous Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz begged her mother to dress her as a boy so that she might attend classes at the University of Mexico.

Women led cloistered lives, like delicate plants in a hothouse, while their husbands were free to circulate as they willed. In the upper-class families the wives and daughters performed little useful labor. Everything was done for them. Servants abounded at their beck and call. No wife or daughter would ever think of shopping in the market place or of carrying a package down the street.

Nor would any man demean himself with manual labor. Accustomed to the life of the victorious soldier, he lived off the fat of the land while others sweated blood. In the country, Indian and mestizo laborers continued to work much as in preconquest days, and frequently with the same implements. When Cortés said, "I did not come to the Indies to till the soil like a peasant," he spoke for every Spaniard.

In the capital cities there were ostentatious colonial courts. The viceroy was a miniature king. Some viceroys surrounded themselves with literary salons so that their ears might be regaled with pompous occasional verse. It was an arid soil for the production of real literature.

This does not mean that pens remained still or that tongues failed to wag. Rhetoric was incessant. Words, idle words, clattered forth in ink and noise, and the colonial epoch might well be characterized as the time of dialectical spiritualism. Writing became as opulent and baroque as colonial architecture. Poetic contests abounded. In 1682 there was one in Mexico, in honor of the Immaculate Conception, at which over five hundred works were presented, the vapid and altisonant rantings of versifiers who thought they were poets. Other writers exalted the viceroys with a plethora of occasional verse, but there was nothing even faintly approaching the magnificent productions of the Spanish Siglo de Oro, which reached its zenith in the seventeenth century in Cervantes, Calderón, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Quevedo, Góngora, and a host of other fine writers.

But as there are no absolutes either in literature or in life, one might examine the literary productions of the Caribbean during colonial days and find them of considerable value in reflecting the culture and society of the people, despite the fact that as pure



literature they rarely rose above indifference. Such an examination will show two outstanding characteristics: first, the grip of intellectual constriction in which the Spanish church-state held the New World; and second, despite all the sound and fury of those who imitated and wrote according to the hollow rules, there was arising, slowly, surely, inexorably, a true feeling of *americanismo*, an American spirit, which came more and more into the ascendant as the centuries passed. Thus the fact of race-mixing, and the slow emergence of the predominant mestizo society, found its spiritual counterpart in this new quality in Caribbean life, which was becoming something that was neither Spanish nor Indian.

One of the first writers whose work points to the birth of this new *americanismo* was Bernardo de Balbuena, author of a long descriptive poem on Mexico entitled *La grandeza mexicana*, published in 1604. Menéndez y Pelayo, the famous Spanish critic, wrote that "if we are to date the birth of American poetry, properly speaking, from any one book, this would be the one."

Balbuena, a Spaniard, saw Mexico as a foreigner who fell in love with his adopted country. He painted a brightly colored checkerboard picture of the gardens, alamedas, fruits, carts, carriages, mule-drivers, horses, *caballeros*, monks, women, of many colors and many languages, silversmiths, jewelers, lapidaries, cultural and literary life, parties, fiestas, dances, promenades, music, and all the other outward manifestations of Mexican life. Balbuena is full of praise for them all. Mexican speech is soft and sweet, the people are friendly and courteous, the women are of extraordinary beauty and virtue, the learned men are great in science, and even the poets penetrate with feeling and beauty the dark enigmas of life. Clearly the effusive encomiums of Balbuena must be viewed with a critical if not with a jaundiced eye. Yet he does make one thing quite clear: that Mexico is a colorful hodge-podge, a society in flux, where many vastly different elements are thrown into juxtaposition in preparation for the crucible, an organism in process of becoming, not a homogeneous and finished whole.

One hundred and seventy-seven years later, Father Rafael Landívar, a Guatemalan monk, produced his famous *Rusticatio Mexicana* which was written entirely in Latin. It was first printed in Italy in 1781. In this poem there are magnificent frescoes of the

Mexican landscape, lakes, volcanoes, cataracts, the cultivation of the cane and the vine, other tropical crops, birds, animals, mines; and toward the end there are also vivid *costumbrista* sketches of typical Mexican games and fiestas, described with verve and exuberance. The Mexican countryside becomes an Arcadian refuge, far from the madding crowd of the heterogeneous cities. Landívar's vast canvas of nature and life in Mexico would probably have been the finest descriptive poem of Spanish American literature had it been written in the language of Spain. The fact that it was in Latin shows how completely the medieval concept of culture still pervaded the Caribbean, and indeed all of Spanish America. Latin was still the language in which lectures were given in the universities, as was the custom in the Middle Ages in Europe, where first the cloister and later the university were the repositories of culture, islands of learning in an unknown sea. In a literary sense Landívar does not represent an advance over Balbuena. He merely fills out the perspective of the Mexican scene, dwells with loving touch on the flora, fauna, and countryside of Mexico, and suggests that the people who live in this vigorous land may raise the edifice of their new society on a base that will both sustain their bodies and exalt their spirit.

The one truly great creative genius of the seventeenth century in the Spanish colonies was Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz, the Mexican nun, who strangely enough wrote some of the most exquisite love poetry in the Spanish language. She also adored her Lord in a language that spoke with all the mystic feeling, simplicity, and concinnity of the great lyric masters. But Sister Juana was out of step with her times. She renounced the world and entered a Convent, thinking thus to escape from the pomps and vanities of her day, and hoping to find a haven of peace in which her great mind and heart might toil with the bitter mysteries of love and death. The Bishop of Puebla urged Sister Juana to stifle such thinking, and finally she did, writing two protestations of faith in her own blood.

It was as if Sor Juana lived in a prison. One well-known Spanish poet of today, Pedro Salinas, has suggested that she might have been able to lead a rather normal life in the United States of the twentieth century, where women are educated as a matter of course, and where feminine genius finds a fruitful and receptive soil.

There was another Mexican poet, belonging to the same century that produced Sor Juana, who was far more typical of his epoch. This was the Jesuit Matías de Bocanegra, whose "Allegorical Song in View of a Disillusionment" would probably have won first place in a popularity poll of the literature of the seventeenth century. His poem tells this story: A monk, one afternoon in May, feels out of peace with himself and with the world. He appears at the balcony window of his monastery and lets his eyes wander with longing over the countryside and toward the distant mountains. He notices a linnet singing on the branches of a willow nearby. Sadly he reflects that brook, rose, fish, and bird are all joyful and free, while his own life is tortured and prison pent. He decides to renounce the religious state and join them. At this moment of crisis a hawk swoops down from the sky, grabs the linnet in its talons, and soars off into space. With a shudder of apprehension at what might have befallen him, the monk re-enters the cloister with a feeling of elation, as these words ring in his mind:

*If I lose my life while in that manner free,  
I shall not have my liberty, and shall lose Thee.*

The poem is written with considerable feeling and, in a way, characterizes the epoch, for life, literature, and society as a whole follow the monk into that cloister, which to them was security, tradition—the medieval world of Spain in the days of her glory. That it was a world of great beauty, none will deny. We have but to behold the thousands of religious buildings in the Caribbean countries, particularly in Mexico, to see proof of this fact. These are gems of remarkable loveliness in the diadem of the Spanish New World. While North Americans, with their own hands, carved a nation out of the wilderness, Spanish Americans raised these last great monuments of medieval art.

The Spanish colonial empire endured for over three centuries. Conquistador and priest had done their work so well that colonial institutions were imposed over nearly the whole extent of the present-day independent nations. Very little frontier territory was left, certainly nothing remotely comparable to our western United States into which the independent thirteen colonies could flow, carrying along in this expansion their new American dream of democracy. And so the end of colonial times in Spanish America

is primarily a political event. The Spaniards were ousted, the Creoles took over, but institutions remained unchanged. The colony persisted, socially and spiritually, in the independent societies.

The literary Makers and Singers of the Revolution for Independence add little to the picture. Andrés Bello of Venezuela, the great classicist of Spanish American letters, spent nineteen years in London after being stranded there during the struggle against Spain. In London he wrote and published his *Silvas americanas*, after the manner of Vergil, in which he called on culture to desert Europe where she had become a prostitute, and come to America. He also extolled the beauty, the promise, and the fertility of the tropics, praised the simple country life, disdained the city as too much of a replica of European society, and sang the praises of liberty, which he saw as a goddess who lived close to the soil. When Bello left London, he went to Chile where he spent the remainder of his life, founded the university, and became a great lawgiver and educator, who left an indelible classic imprint on Spanish American culture. There was no point in his returning to his native land, for he realized that mind cannot function in a vacuum, and Venezuela, scourged by the wars of independence, was a physical shambles and an intellectual desert.

José María Heredia of Cuba, who resided for many years in the United States, Mexico, and Venezuela, an exile from his native land, was the first romantic poet in Spanish American letters. He loved the Caribbean earth, and hated tyranny. His principal contribution, aside from painting the tragedy of the individual in the presence of the great manifestations of nature and the swamp of time, was to give vital and beautiful expression to his deep sensitivity to the Caribbean landscape, his romantic melancholy, his subjective elaboration of sensations which are the very base of the romantic school, and which in this case express a poetic affirmation of faith in the emerging societies of the newly freed lands.

Fernández de Lizardi of Mexico, known best by his pen name, "The Mexican Thinker," was more of a realist. His entire life was devoted to pointing out the cankers and abuses which surrounded him, and his dozens of articles and pamphlets were a clarion call to reform. He was imprisoned for attacking the viceroy and excommunicated for defending the Freemasons, but his zeal knew no

end. Saturated with the revolutionary ideas of the French Encyclopedists, he founded paper after paper to give them full expression. As soon as one periodical was banned or died, he founded another. His *El periquillo sarnieto* (1816), which first appeared in serial form, has been called the first Spanish American novel. The protagonist of the book, Periquillo, is a rogue, anti-hero, *pícaro*, a Mexican parasite who attaches himself first to one organism then to another, sucking out enough sustenance to maintain life. In a way of speaking he is a symbol of Mexican society. His experiences present "a true picture of the sprawling, teeming, swarming people of Mexico, ragged, eternally cheated, crowding about the food stalls which smoke along the market side, sniffing the good smells through the dirt and confusion, insatiably and hopelessly hungry."<sup>4</sup> The problem of subsistence occupied them completely. They were the product of an unsavory colonial past obstructing the path of progress, yet themselves embodying the great hopes of the Mexican people, as yet formless, inchoate, but indestructible.

Symbolic, too, is one of the very few episodes in which the author permits himself a note of tenderness. Periquillo, the protagonist, had been robbed and beaten while drunk.<sup>4</sup> An Indian woman, poor as he, gives him clothes and food. Deeply touched, Periquillo embraces the ragged creature. The Indian may yet be the salvation of many a Caribbean country.

When independence was finally achieved, in the early 1820's, excluding of course Cuba and Puerto Rico, the victory was followed by political and economic anarchy. Everything had to be improvised. Governments were established one day and fell the next. The spirit of looting, so prevalent during the war, became everybody's business. The generals, who had won the victories, finally took over and became the despots of the new states. Only in this way was there peace.

Fifteen years of warfare had desolated the land and impoverished the people. The great colonial art of church building had come to an end. The rock of ages was shattered. Society and man were now in a period of stress. Slowly, at first almost imperceptibly, a new outlook began to emerge. Literature did thrive and give voice to the future. It was not paid for, and needed no wealth to sustain it. It did need a goal, an ideal before it, and these it had. The two most important movements of the nineteenth century, the *Re-*

*forma*, in Mexico (1855-1872) and the struggle against Rosas in Argentina (1830-1852), were carried on with the aid "of a huge amount of literature." Politics and literature were synonymous for a generation. The best literature was written by the intellectual liberals, the political "outs," those who detested the tyrants, Santa Anna and Rosas. Their writings helped dethrone the tyrants and finally they found themselves in control of the government, as presidents and cabinet ministers.

The occasional literature of the colonial sycophants had now become the political barb of the authors of independence pointed at the injustice of tyrants. They justified the ways of the heroes to posterity and rationalized the republican dream. The *cuadro de costumbres*, sketch of customs and manners, became a strong and genuine regional expression. Positivism became a powerful force in Caribbean life. Material development was its watchword. The picturesque, if backward or wretched, must go. The clash between agricultural feudalism and industrial capitalism was joined. Society was split into two groups. those who were trying to lead, and those who did not want to follow. The security of a colonial past seemed to many more attractive than the uncertain promises of the future. The new states were searching themselves to discover a new reality, a new basis and belief for their actions and for the society which they longed to achieve.

The new Caribbean states, after half a century of struggling toward democracy, which continued to be a chimera between the flashes of machetes, were finally organized and made to function effectively by another generation of dictators: Rafael Núñez, of Colombia; Reina Barrios and Estrada Cabrera, of Guatemala; Guzmán Blanco, of Venezuela, and Porfirio Díaz, the dictator par excellence, of Mexico. These men brought periods of stability, peace, economic expansion. Material progress became the panacea of a whole generation of dictators. They resurrected the strategy of the conquistador, knocked dissidents into a common mould, perpetuated the colonial society of landlords and day laborers, kept the masses subservient to their higher will. The cities were cleaned up, land was confiscated and given to friends, foreign capital poured in, agriculture remained feudal. Rural families and Indians were worse off than they had been under Spanish rule. Yet there was order and even prosperity on the haciendas and in the towns.

This stability and leisure made possible the birth of the first widespread literary movement in Spanish American history, "Modernism." Verse, essays, and novels, during the previous generation written in great haste and for a political purpose, now turn into an art form. Political leaders are no longer the best writers, but they subsidize the best writers: Rubén Darío, of Nicaragua; Gutiérrez Nájera and Amado Nervo, of Mexico; and many others who were given easy government jobs. This group of writers did not bite the hand that was feeding them. They sought refuge in an ivory tower which symbolized the distance that separated the masses from their intellectual leadership, and there lifted high the cultural façade of Spanish American life.

The modernist writers were not nationalistically minded. The greatest of them all, Rubén Darío, was born in Nicaragua, lived and wrote in Chile, Argentina, and Spain, was famous and widely read in all Spanish-speaking countries. Darío and his group proved that Spanish America had come of age in a cultural sense. Society was rich enough both materially and intellectually, and had been stable long enough, for the cream to rise to the top. They were the cream.

In another sense, too, many of the modernists were characteristic of the societies from which they sprang. Darío was of Spanish-Indian-Negro extraction, a true representative of the emerging cosmic race of so many Caribbean areas. His alloy was as strong, if not stronger, than that of any of the original races. Furthermore, the modernist writers were conversant with the other literatures of Western civilization, particularly that of France, and in their own productions they threw all of these influences into the crucible until something distinctly new and American emerged. From this viewpoint modernism was a deeply American movement. If it rarely touched the masses, and then only as the scepter of a learned king, it at least proved to the people as a whole that their culture was as alive and worthy as that of any nation, that there was a great spiritual and cultural force in their midst which only needed canalization to give it world prestige and world acclaim. Such knowledge has a way of sifting down even to the illiterates.

But the modernists did more than this. They defined the spiritual quality that was Spanish America, and showed wherein it differed from that of Europe and the United States. They took the cultural

traditions of their peoples and made them into an art form, thus giving them universality. As writers their quality was so high that they also won for their America her cultural independence from Europe. And despite their lack of a keen social sense, they established a feeling of spiritual brotherhood among themselves and among their nations.

While the modernists soared into the higher flights of fancy and ennobled the tragic destiny of man, there were other, perhaps less talented, authors, realistic novelists, and writers of regional sketches, who gave a clearer picture of ordinary daily life in the Caribbean countries. The modernists were the elite; the daily ceremonial of the humdrum, the tale of little lives transfixed by the past and unable to escape into the broader future, of family life uprooted and destroyed by violence, is the grist of the realists.

A Venezuelan novelist, Gonzalo Picón Febres, 1860-1918, lets us see the skimmed milk that lies under the cream. In this society the unworthy are successful, the incompetent are exalted, the ignorant are able to shine brilliantly. A few false words of praise in some newspaper, paid in advance, builds up prestige among the fanatical and ignorant, and before long, to the accompaniment of much noise, the mediocre man becomes a great figure. Those who live in the country, if able to accumulate a competence, soon find it taken away from them by these slick leaders, who become the politicians and generals. The wounds of corruption, poverty, and violence are never healed.

In the novel *El sargento Felipe*, 1899, Picón Febres rips off the bandage and lets the sore run. The book is dedicated to "the honest hardworking people of Venezuela—the real victim of our civil wars." Sergeant Felipe owned fifteen acres of land, a few coffee trees, a cornfield, some live stock. He took pride in his work, was able to live comfortably. A Venezuelan revolution broke out, Felipe was conscripted. He fought bravely, was wounded, and spent several weeks in a military hospital. In the meantime pillaging bands of soldiers, from both sides, drove off his stock, tore up his farm; and when the sergeant returned home his wife was dead, his house was burned to the ground, and his daughter was the mistress of the nearby landowner. Felipe kills the landowner and commits suicide by hurling himself from a cliff. His death is a symbol of the suicide of hope which has taken place in so many



Caribbean hearts in the presence of corrupt politics and bestial soldiers. Picón Febres describes them in devastating terms: "godless men who know no law, thriving on disorder, of small conscience and little souls, seduced by the pittance which pillaging offers, cast into war by hunger and misery, without any desire except continual robbery, and without any ideal except to obtain the booty of the conquered." Their faces are writhed in satanic grimaces, in their hands is a bottle of brandy, blasphemies and insults are on their lips, and wherever they go they cause the desolation of property and the mutilation of human dignity.

Another Venezuelan novelist, Miguel Eduardo Pardo, in *Todo un pueblo*, or *Villabrava* (1899), views the Venezuelan capital, Caracas or Villabrava, as the spawning center of this breed of soldiers. "In this city no machines were manufactured, but doctors were made in a year; there was no one to sweep the streets, but there were plenty of people to sweep clean the national treasury; there was no military school, but soldiers thronged the streets in mobs, like dogs in Constantinople." The life work of the soldier was to take part in a revolution in order to have an excuse to pillage the countryside, and the work of lawyers and doctors was to conspire in the cities or to wait with folded arms in the plazas until they were appointed to government jobs.<sup>5</sup>

Rufino Blanco-Fombona, another Venezuelan novelist, is even more scathing in his satire of twentieth-century society. In the prologue to his *Hombre de oro* (*Man of Gold*), 1916, he writes: "Let the reader see in this mirror my country and other barocracies where the unscrupulous user, the general without battles, the writer without shame, and the woman without honor, all triumph and prosper." Blanco-Fombona's thesis seems to be that the vicious and unworthy shall inherit the earth. Virtue is weak, wrong is dynamic. Goodness leads to submission, violence to success and power. Truth is crucified upon the scaffold, and wrong is placed upon the throne.

What kind of society is this which leads so many very good writers, the best minds of their countries, to become so pessimistic and so embittered? It is a society built upon conquest, where poverty walks with ubiquitous feet, and assimilation, the work of centuries, is still a process and not an accomplishment. So little has changed since colonial days, except that then there was peace and stability,

and now there are only periods of armed truce suspended between outbreaks of violence. Country life, progressing during the truces, is broken on the rack of every passing revolution. Urban life continues to bounce forward from campaign to campaign. The countryfolk pour into the towns where there is at least a relative security. The towns are typified by their great churches and their sleepy plazas. The Church itself, once the growing seed of beauty in colonial times, when it reflected the religious aspiration of an entire people, now rests on its laurels, and lies drowsily across the volcano.

Up and down roughly cobbled streets walk barefooted countryfolk, townsmen in modern clothes, burros and horses, clattering huge-wheeled carts and gleaming automobiles. The houses are walled with chipped stones or adobe, and interior patios shelter the privacy of family life dominated by patriarchal authority, resisting change. There is often built up within these walls of tradition the poison of frustration, the violence of suppression, the fury of imprisonment. A Mexican novel, *Al filo del agua* (*On the Verge of the Cloudburst*), 1948, paints the psychological picture with great intensity. Fury, Church, and sex are mixed in the crucible. A limited horizon means a limited gaze into the future. The repeated experience with rebellion means distrust of rebellion, but violence for its own sake is an outlet, an escape valve of a downtrodden people. Poor, fanatical, unlettered, with slight hope and great disillusionment, the church-dominated Mexican village in this book lives the life of the body, tormented by fears, inhibitions, and Freudian dreams.<sup>6</sup> But the cities continue to grow rapidly, the wealth of the entire country is heaped in tall and expensive buildings which line the streets of the cities. And here is emerging a new middle class, a mestizo class of clerks, skilled workers and businessmen, on which may depend the final destinies of the various nations.

During the rise of Modernism (1880-1896) Cuba was not yet free from Spanish rule. Her greatest writer, José Martí, is also the apostle of Cuban liberty. In Martí the traditional tie between public life and literature continues. North American history books are likely to tell us that the intervention of the United States, with some help from Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, made Cuba free. But the history texts of the Caribbean nations would tell us

that Martí, the Apostle of Freedom, the man who gave his life in that cause, stirred the hearts of his countrymen and made the freedom of Cuba possible.

It is fitting to point out that Martí did some of his most important work among the exiled Cubans living in Florida, in Tampa and Key West. Two of the finest things he ever wrote were delivered as speeches before the Cuban colony in Tampa. After hearing Martí speak one old man in the audience exclaimed: "I couldn't understand much that he said, but I felt as if I wanted to cry."

In Tampa Martí outlined his feelings in cogent terms "If in things concerning my country I should be given the choice of one good above all others . . . this would be the good I should choose: I would want the cornerstone of our Republic to be the devotion of Cubans to the full dignity of man. . . . Either the Republic has as its foundation the basic character of every one of her sons, his habit of working with his hands and thinking for himself and respecting, as if it were a matter of family honor, the unrestricted freedom of others—in short, the passion for man's essential worth—or else the Republic is not worth a single one of the tears of our women nor a solitary drop of a brave man's blood."<sup>7</sup> He repeated this creed many times: liberty for all men. He made a point of striving to break down the barriers of race by referring to "the generous Negro, the Negro brother." And in one of his finest poems he wrote:

*Yo sé de un pesar profundo  
Entre las penas sin nombres;  
La esclavitud de los hombres  
Es la gran pena del mundo.*

When Martí wrote, the entire Caribbean, indeed all of Spanish America, listened intently, and when he died, his words continued to grow as new green pine trees in their hearts. Martí perceived the continental responsibility that lay before the intellectuals of Spanish America, and made that the star that guided his life. He was also the first writer who drew into focus, clearly and for all to see, the fundamental dichotomy of Spanish American life.

"He perceived the vast incoherence of America. He saw the isolation and rancorous silence of the Indian, most American of

them all; the irresponsibility and blindness of the others, the fairer-skinned men of pen and sword who had not, even yet, felt the innermost stirrings of the new world. . . . At first he had been baffled and harassed by the general primitiveness of these new peoples oscillating between anarchy and despotism; but slowly an interpretation of the dramatic problem of America had taken shape in his mind. The Spanish Conquest had interrupted and frustrated the march of the great native cultures, superimposing on them forms alien to their nature. America needed to resume its shape, under the new era's spirit of investigation and analysis."<sup>7</sup>

"The problem of independence was not a change of forms, but a change of spirit," he wrote. The leaders of the new nations did not make this change.<sup>17</sup> The result was that revolution became almost a way of life in the countries of the Caribbean, for it was the only protest possible against the sterility of permanent despotism. Martí believed that these revolutions, which are thrown in Spanish America's face by those who do not know her, "are the mark of honor of our peoples, who have not hesitated to speed up at the cost of their lives, the road of progress, and who thus can proudly wear these wars on their brows as a crown."<sup>18</sup>

This, of course, is the idealist speaking.

In 1910 began the Mexican Revolution, which was the most conspicuous event of the century for the society of the Caribbean. Porfirio Díaz, dictator par excellence, was deposed by an idealistic and wealthy landowner named Madero. Madero did not understand the necessities of his time: a hunger for bread, a hunger for land, a hunger for justice and liberty. He temporized and was assassinated. The Revolution now exploded like a volcano. The man-swarm that was the Mexican masses erupted and carried the holocaust to all corners of their country. Mexican society was hacked up by the roots as the nation was torn from her colonial past. This was no political rebellion; for the first time a Latin American revolution had become social.

The Mexican Revolution gave birth to an entire cycle of literature and art. During the nineteenth century the Indian had entered into literature only as a note of local color; he now became the body and soul of nearly all writing, the mainstay of the present and the hope of the future. The novel of the Revolution became the most outstanding novelistic type in Latin American letters. And

with the Revolution was also born the great mural painting, also on an Indianist base, of Rivera, Orozco, Alfaro Siqueiros, and many other artists of world renown. Mexican music took a new lease on life and reverted to the country's Indian past for inspiration. The Revolution also had far-reaching effects in other Spanish American countries. A new attitude toward the dispossessed classes came into being. Indian, mestizo peon, Negro—all now really "belonged" to the societies of which they formed a part. They were perhaps "a poor thing, but mine own."<sup>14</sup>

The best-known novelist of the Mexican Revolution was Mariano Azuela. As an army doctor he had followed the hordes of Pancho Villa up and down the length of his country. He saw the Revolution at first hand. In his most famous novel, *Los de abajo* (*The Underdogs*), 1915, he presents it as an almost blind upheaval, grim, macabre, bloody, overwhelming, a cosmic force that swept men before it as leaves are swept into the whirlwind. Azuela wrote in a style that was pithy, word-etchings of great feeling and power. He did not accuse the Revolution, nor did he defend it. He was merely a camera catching all that lay in the path of his moving eye. The protagonist of the novel is the Mexican masses, the underdogs, Indian peons, furiously destroying the old order.

One of the characters in *The Underdogs* watches white smoke spiral upward over the heavy black vapors of a flaming town, and feels, with a kind of cosmic joy, that the Revolution is something beautiful. But the aftermath immediately sets in as he thinks: "A pity what remains to do won't be as beautiful! We must wait a while, until there are no men left to fight on either side, until no sound of shot rings through the air save from the mob as carrion-like it falls upon the booty; we must wait until the psychology of our race, condensed into two words, shines clear and luminous as a drop of water: *Robbery! Murder!* What a colossal failure we would make of it, friend, if we, who offer our enthusiasm and our lives to crush a wretched tyrant, became the builders of a monstrous edifice holding one hundred or two hundred thousand monsters of exactly the same sort. People without ideals! A tyrant folk! Vain bloodshed!"<sup>8</sup>

*The Underdogs* was written during the heat of the campaign, and in it the author made no attempt to strike a perspective. In later, but less artistic novels, he did strike such a perspective, and

the picture was revolting. By this time the Revolution had been successful, the generals were in control of the government, and Mexico boasted on paper one of the most advanced of constitutions. Azuela is more than skeptical. In one scene of his novel *El camarada Pantoja* (*Comrade Pantoja*), 1937, a former peon is speaking of the Revolution in vapid high-flown words, and a member of his audience remarks: "Well, aside from his ideas, doesn't it seem to you remarkable that an humble peon can express himself in that fashion?" His companion answers: "It seems to me that these poor devils are dying to find a doctrine that will justify their robberies, their murders, and all their infamies, in order to pass as decent men and not as bandits, above which level they have been unable to rise." He then goes on to explain that the bandit in power, gutted on blood, flesh, and wine, creates for himself new necessities, and civilization begins to fascinate him as a light fascinates the moth. The generals now in control of the government go about boasting: "I am killing in the name of Institutions, I am killing in defence of my philosophic creed." Back in the days of the French Revolution the most rabid peasant would have refused to shake hands with the official executioners, but in Mexico City many of the best families were associating freely with this new breed of rulers. The national morality was that of the sewer.

Other novels of the Revolution fill out the canvas. In *El águila y la serpiente* (*The Eagle and the Serpent*), 1928, Martín Luis Guzmán levels his pen at the bestiality, cruelty, and banditry of the improvised revolutionary leaders. He sees the Revolutionary ideal, the Eagle, corrupted and overwhelmed by the Serpent, ignorance, fanaticism, politics, and animal passions. In this novel are also many fine flashes that reveal the society about which the author writes. The novel begins with these words: "To go from El Paso, Texas, to Ciudad Juárez in Chihuahua, was one of the greatest sacrifices, not to say humiliations, that human geography had imposed on the sons of Mexico. . . . Ciudad Juárez is a sad sight; sad in itself, and still sadder when compared with the bright orderliness of that opposite river-bank, close but foreign." The streets were filled with mud, and lined with low flat buildings badly in need of whitewash or paint. They might have been houses in Mesopotamia five thousand years ago. "Yet if our faces burned with shame to look at it, nevertheless, or perhaps for that very

reason, it made our hearts dance as we felt the roots of our being sink into something we had known, possessed, and loved for centuries, in all its brutishness, in all the filth of body and soul that pervades its streets. Not for nothing were we Mexicans. Even the sinister gleam of the occasional street-lights seemed to wrap us round in a pulsation of comforting warmth."<sup>9</sup> One of the characters then speaks: "This is a pigsty. When the Revolution wins we're going to clean it up." Many hopeless years passed, but clean it up they did.

Gregorio López y Fuentes, another novelist of the Revolution, in *Tierra (Land)*, 1933, tells how the Mexican peons under Zapata came to fuse their desire for *tierra y libertad*, land and liberty, in the struggle against the big landowners, and in his prize novel *El indio (The Indian)*, 1935, he describes how an outlying Indian village is destroyed by city men who come seeking gold. The young Indian protagonist of the book is crippled in his attempt to escape from them, and the novel ends as he is watching from ambush the rifle-flash of a new attack. "Distrust itself, as he looks out on the highway—civilization. High on the mountain, the sentinel waits for the signal. Like the rest of their people, all they know is that the *gente de razón* want to attack them. That hatreds snarl in packs in the valley and the sierra. And that, in the city, the leader is well taken care of."<sup>10</sup> The novel recapitulated the history of the Indian race conquered by the white man's guns, crippled by his greed, silenced and made sullen by his hate.

More recently, in 1948, the same author wrote a novel called *El entresuelo (Mezzanine)*, in which he attempts to bridge the social abyss that exists between classes in Mexico today. He presents, most particularly, the tragedy of the nascent middle class, interpreted in this novel as a family living in a mezzanine apartment, caught and mashed between the rich family that lives above them, and the poor family below. The upper family does not feel their needs, because they have always had everything. The family down below does not feel their prejudices or their ambitions, because they have never had anything. The husband, originally from the country, where his parents had owned a plot of land, has lost the security of the simple country life. He and his family have now acquired new tastes based intimately on motion pictures, bathtubs, newspapers, and electric lights which their meager income will not

satisfy. These people do not need or want land. They would not know what to do with land if they had it. What they do need is better paying jobs, economic security to take the place of the security of the soil. The private dwelling in which they first lived in the city had been torn down to make way for a large apartment to house other families streaming in from the countryside. The national economic structure cannot support them; disillusionment and disintegration ensue. The author's implication is that the Mexican middle class has yet to be moulded into a strong and integrated group. Mexico must build a still firmer skeleton on which to grow. The abyss, ever narrowing, still lies across the path of Mexico's future, separating the wealthy from the underdogs. The middle-class bridge between them is a thing of frailty and desperation.

Other outstanding novelists of the Caribbean area who have left indelible paintings of life in their region are: José Eustacio Rivera of Colombia, who in 1924 published his *La vorágine* (*The Vortex*), an intensely dramatic and poetic story of the struggle of nature versus man. Landscape, the tropical jungle, is the protagonist of this powerful book. Man becomes a puppet in nature's grasp, and is devoured by the wild vortex of tropical green. Nature is still more powerful than man in many Caribbean regions, and in these regions society does not exist. It is a fact that in Colombia, for example, scarcely more than a third of the nation is effective national territory. Thinly populated, wild, inaccessible, this huge part of the country plays almost no part in the national life. The total population is overshadowed by these unassimilated geographic areas and social homogeneity is confined to the towns. The same thing is true of vast parts of Venezuela, Mexico, and many regions of Central America. It is not true of the Antilles.

The Venezuelan, Rómulo Gallegos, not long ago president of his country, in many of his novels also stresses the primacy of the landscape in the social picture. In *Cantaclaro* (1931), the folk spirit of the plains is the protagonist, in *Canaima* (1935), the tropical jungle again obliterates civilized man, and in *Doña Bárbara* (1929), the barbarism of the Venezuelan llanos or plains takes on symbolic significance in the struggle between their society and that of civilization, which is the theme of the novel. In this novel civilized law and morality are brought to the plains, and barbarism



is defeated. But when Gallegos was elected president of the country, with 72 per cent of the popular vote, he was unable to bring such law or morality to the nation as a whole. After a few weeks he was illegally deposed by the military, and driven into exile, and the courts, congress, and people were powerless to defend him. The military coup had become too much of a habit in the national life.

The American landscape so altered European man that he was cast in a new mould. Oftentimes it was nature and geography rather than race or blood which was the strongest determining factor. From the new geographic regions where there was anything resembling geographic unity, there arose a sort of collective New World figure. Out of the pampas sprang the Argentine *gaucho*, out of Venezuela's plains the *llanero* or plainsman, in Mexico there was the *charro*, and in the Antilles the *guajiro* and the *jibaro*. These words signify not only a geographic collective type, but a cultural heritage and a way of life as well, both definitely of the New World.

In Cuba one of the outstanding interpreters of contemporary society is Carlos Loveira, who early in life became an orphan and worked as a menial in a Cuban home, then emigrated with the family for which he worked to the United States. He returned to Cuba to take part in the fight against Spain in 1898. After the defeat of Spain he devoted himself to labor reform, to the organization of unions, and to writing. His novels, all partially autobiographical, present a picture of Caribbean society which has been briefly summarized as follows:<sup>11</sup> "The great mass of middle class and poor people are skeptical, profoundly skeptical. Each day the number of those that are married by the Church or that have their children baptized is smaller. . . . No longer are satisfactions sought in a heaven which is very doubtful, but in the world of the living. . . . And the same thing that is happening to religion is happening to democracy. The people no longer believe in it, whether it be because that which has been known as democracy has been nothing more than a hoax, a mere caricature of democracy, or because it is insufficient to secure the relative happiness to which all men on earth may aspire." The material satisfactions of life also fail to exist, and obsession with sex, the great bodily passion, the release of all tensions, characterizes these people.

There are two aspects of Caribbean life which have been inherent

in literature almost since its beginning. These are regionalism-costumbrismo, and folklore. The *sabor de la tierra*, or flavor of one's home region, is dear to the hearts of most writers who come from countries where regionalism, preserved by lack of communications and lack of money to travel, overshadows the national perspective. With independence from Spain such writing acquired new momentum, and in all kinds of writings, the sports, games, customs, manners, fiestas, regional types, and regional thinking flowered profusely. Some authors, especially the earlier ones, described these things with real affection, and longed to preserve them as picturesque aspects of the national life. Other writers, particularly those of recent years, revealed the opposite side of the picture, believed that this very picturesqueness and regionalism were inimical to progress. A water-carrier hawking his ware on provincial streets may be very picturesque, but he is also very unhygienic. Narrow and antiquated cobbled streets are picturesque, but they also impede traffic. The superstitious practices of Indians or countryfolk may be fascinating, but they indicate ignorance and fanaticism. The latter views are generally current in the Caribbean today. But despite this fact, many contemporary books still carry a description of some custom, some regional dance, some native superstition, some fiesta, or some regional type. Only in the past twenty years or so have these aspects of life become subordinate to a broader perspective and the hope for national homogeneity.

Such a social setup is also a great fountain for the creation and preservation of folklore. In any society where the masses do not read or write, there is a strong tendency toward verbal, imaginative expression, through folklore. This is the so-called literacy of the illiterate. Give these people newspapers, magazines, motion pictures and radios, and folklore will go out the window. Lacking these things it remains a pivotal point of their lives. It takes the place of book education, preserves the most vivid cultural expression of the whole people, becomes a kind of spontaneous sublimation of the emotions. In this kind of society everyone is a participant; there are no spectators. Book education and the fine techniques of art forms, music, painting, et cetera, turn a primitive society of creators and participants into a nation of spectators. This is the position of the people of the United States, whose supreme folk voice was found in the spirituals of our unlettered Negroes, but

now even these have turned largely into an art form. In a similar manner the folk expression of the Caribbean is dying today. When industry and gadgets perform the work of a nation, and the airplane comes into town, the city makes over the country in its own image, and folk art disappears as a living entity.

In the Antilles where the Negro early took the place of the Indian slave, there have always been many Negroid artistic expressions in music, dances, in ritualistic expressions of many kinds, in the perpetuation of tribal cults and the primitive arts. During the past quarter of a century there has also been a great flowering of Negro poetry. Unlike the Negro literature of the United States, its primary concern is not to bewail the poor lot of the black man, but is rather to give rhythmic and musical expression to the Negro's own cultural heritage, composed of his African background fused with the Creole elements which have become part and parcel of his life today. This synthesis makes of the Negro poetry an excellent expression of what has often been called the "spiritual mestizaje" of the Caribbean. Race-mixing has not been merely a physical thing, but a spiritual thing as well. The Cuban writer Juan Marinello says of this poetry that "in it we find our yesterday, our present, and our tomorrow."

The Negro poetry of the Antilles is not based on the Bible and Christianity as are the North American spirituals, but revert to the native African cults for rhythmic inspiration. It is a pagan and sensual thing. Blanco-Fombona of Venezuela and many other Caribbean authors have said that the Negro must be "Europeanized," absorbed completely into the white blood stream, before Caribbean society as a whole can move forward. Other writers, equally vociferous, among them Pedro Henríquez-Ureña of Santo Domingo, declare that the survival of the Indian and Negro, as races and as cultural forces, implies no danger, but rather adds color and zest to the national expression. "All hindrances to our progress," says Henríquez-Ureña, "come from the insufficiency of the education and economic opportunities offered to the masses."<sup>2</sup> This may be quite true, but if Henríquez-Ureña believes that racial folklore can survive economic progress and the urbanization of the countryside, he is whistling in the dark and speaks against all the experience of history.

In summary, an interpretation of Caribbean society through

literature leads to these conclusions: First, the problem of race-mixing still remains. The Caribbean is racially heterogeneous but assimilation is progressing fast, and the man of mixed-blood will become the citizen of the future. Second, outside of the cities there is widespread poverty, and there the society is very primitive. Third, in only a few areas does there exist a unified class structure; with the possible exception of Cuba and Costa Rica no Caribbean country is composed largely of a single class, numerically, economically, and culturally dominant, which may be called at once the body, the voice, and the soul of the nation. Fourth, for some years past there has been a tremendous influx of the agrarian country population into the industrialized cities, and the resultant middle class, now in a stage of rapid expansion, belongs to the near future. Fifth, the obstacles of nature have in many regions held back the advance of society. Sixth, medievalism, abstraction, tradition, and political corruption still obstruct the road of progress.

But far more important than any of these points is the prevailing spirit of Caribbean life which is revealed in the literature. The letter of the law killeth, while the spirit giveth life. In literature and in the arts the Caribbean has already found its way. Both in the folk arts and in the arts of civilization this part of the world may vie with any other. The blending body may still be weak but the spirit is of a tremendous creative power, and every great movement of history was begun by the spirit of some exceptional man. Let us now generalize symbolically.

One Caribbean writer has said of us Anglo-Saxons: You belong to the past, we belong to the future. The United States is the last great imperium of a single race, the last repository of the white man's dominance. And our greatest hope of salvation lies in the very fact that we are not a pure race, but a mixture, a bridge toward the race of the future, an alloy of races in process of blending, an alloy which can create a race stronger than those which proceed from a single trunk, the cosmic race of tomorrow.<sup>12</sup>

And Alfonso Reyes, dean of Mexican letters, drove the nail up to its hilt when he stated: "I believe in only one race—the human race." Such words may sound pompous or too general to have real meaning. But the reality of the Caribbean contradicts this. Caribbean society and Caribbean thought is finding its way toward

a kind of universalism, broader than the characteristically more restricted attitudes, feelings, and spirit of the United States

In this movement toward universalism, it is the individual and not the masses who stands out. From its Hispanic beginnings Caribbean society has stressed the superior individual; colonial education existed in order to produce *l'homo singulare*, the exceptional and superior man, rather than to raise the general intellectual level. Modified by the necessity of public education, that concept still prevails today. Let us not forget that a culture for all, at the level of all, means losing in profundity what may be gained by extension. Education in the Caribbean has never been a vast levelling process, and probably will never become so. Race-mixing is performing that function from the physical angle, leaving the spirit free. All of the literature of the Caribbean, all of the art, the history, the culture, and the social development "tend toward the formation of human types of high calibre, a goal which interests the nations of the South far more than the creation of masses standardized by technique."<sup>13</sup> The Caribbean is moving toward a middle-class society economically and physically for the masses *will* be heard; but this has not strangled selective values. The cult of beauty and the divine frenzy of poem or picture are intrinsic to Spanish American life. The Caribbean has developed through a series of spiritual convulsions; and with the exception of the Mexican Revolution, which concluded by bringing forth an entire generation of superior individuals in literature and in art, the Caribbean masses are more indifferent, and individuals are outstanding, "who, while contradicting the crowd, tower above it."<sup>13</sup> The men who follow me on this round table will amply prove my point.

"There is a legend that the path of civilization, our civilization, has been ever westward. Originating in the fabulous garden of the East, it has touched in turn Babylonia, Greece, Rome, western Europe, and last of all America. Even in the beginning, America was a land of promise, and in that land the civilization and society of the South, the trials and aspirations of its governments, the visions of its artists, and the voices of its people speak out today louder than ever with the concord of their strength, with their immensity of hope, their colossus of promise."<sup>15</sup>

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Germán Arciniegas: MAGIC IN THE CARIBBEAN

(Translated by John F. Martin)

THE deepest impression that the poetry of the Caribbean makes is one of a magic spell. To say this is not to say anything new. All poetry must be of this kind. In the beginning, poetry was magic. Its first purpose was to captivate, to give divine, supernatural power to human desires. Rhetoric itself is filled with magic formulas. The mathematics of the meter, the order of the stanzas, the sacred mystery, the Pythagorean of Dante's tercets are reminiscent of the laws of magic. Even when the poet writes free verse, he resorts to a trick to set a hidden snare, to carry the theme along even more mysterious paths that disconcert the novice in the rhetorical arts, the recent initiate, the apprentice in magic.

In popular speech the word "spell" is used in a trivial sense to express the charm of poetry. But it must not be forgotten that the poem was written with just that aim, to bewitch. It forms part of the art of sorcery. And it is more than a coincidence, indeed it is most revealing, that the Spanish word "song" (*canto*) is embodied in the word "spell" (*encanto*). Neither should it be forgotten that although poetry is not sung, it is song. Historically, in magic, the spell was cast by singing songs, whence stems the marvellous muddle of being unable in certain instances to draw the line between religion, music, poetry, and the dance. All form part of the same brew in the sacred caldron.

What must be noticed in relation to the Caribbean is that here magic is fresh. Magic is not a quality, an adjective of Caribbean poetry. Its poetry still forms part of magic. The grammatical order should be reversed, and magic used as a substantive, as something

substantial. Everyone knows that the Caribbean is a sea haunted by demons; that it has been the home of the hurricane, of wooden-legged pirates, of the black flag with white skull and bones, of desperate smugglers; of Cubagua, the sunken city, and many other fiendish delights. But that is not all. Just as there is an African white magic, a European black magic, and an Asiatic magic, there is a Caribbean magic.

Caribbean magic is cosmic magic. It holds African drums, European prayers, Asiatic poisons, and the smoke and breath of the Rum Islands. Here it is astonishing to see how all the magic of the world comes together and forms one knot. One asks whether those mysterious meetings of the witch doctors, whether those powders, those exhalations, that Voodoo Chief, those opium dens, whether those packs of cards and roulette wheels, those spiritualist sessions, those dances and those verses are at the bottom merely African congas, or Spanish superstitions, or Chinese subtleties, or reminiscences of the natives. They are all this, but this is not all. The whole is the Caribbean.

Studies have been made of cultural exchanges in America. Silvio Zavala has said: "If Europe has brought us wheat, rice, barley, sugar, horses, oxen, the plow, the alphabet and gunpowder, America has paid the price with corn, beans, cocoa, peanuts, tomatoes, red peppers, potatoes, tobacco, chicle, turkeys, rubber, llamas and Indians." These are examples that may be multiplied and expanded into a vast topic. But side by side with this subject one must study the interchange of magic. Before Europe realized what America was—(does she know now?)—the Europeans were being initiated into the art of smoking, of blowing smoke through their noses, of burning tobacco, which are the blue curtains of the theater of magic. The bourgeoisie of Bordeaux grew rich selling Haitian rum. And several million American Indians, ignorant of the excellence of the alphabet and wheat, are familiar with many things used by the gypsies of Granada to kill worms that are given to inflame with love and that are deemed more potent to save us from our enemies than a Pater Noster.

The poetry of Candelario Obeso or of Ballagas, or of Palés Matos or Nicolás Guillén; the essays of Fernando Ortiz; the histories of Alejo Carpentier; the tales of the slave hunter by Lino Novas Calvo; *The Sunken City* by Enrique Bernardo Núñez—all



are full of magic. There is magic in the novel of the Englishman, William Henry Hudson, the scene of which is laid in the Orinoco jungles, just as there is magic in *Canaima* by Rómulo Gallegos, and in *La vorágine* by José Eustacio Rivera. There is magic in Rubén Darío, in José Martí, or in *Los angelitos negros* by Andrés Eloy Blanco. Antonia Palacios has written a small masterpiece in *Ana Isabel, una niña decente*, with a magic thread running through the whole work. Magic will endure in the Caribbean while man must fight the wild forces of nature, and man feels helpless, naked, and defenseless against the hurricane, the dictator, and the capitalist.

### I. *The Natural Explanation of Magic*

Dr. Howard W. Haggard, of Yale University, has written a delightful book on the history of medicine. It is a narrative that covers everything from the realm of the witch doctors to the physicians of our days. Like all histories of medicine, the book serves to give us a natural explanation of magic. Faced with a problem that he cannot solve rationally, man resorts to sorcery, to a supernatural power, to a miracle or to magic, so as to have a hope on which to rely. If the invocation of God fails him, he goes under cover of darkness to make a pact with the devil. This happens both in *The Guajira* and in the pages of *Faust*.

Recently in a meeting at Columbia University, Don Agustín Nieto Caballero explained to us the reasons that the Guajira Indians had for dedicating their temples to the devil, instead of dedicating them to God. According to them, or according to Don Agustín, the basic reasoning is as follows: God is an infinitely good being, who expects nothing in return for doing good. He loves us because He is the source of love. On the other hand, the devil must be flattered; he must receive offerings; he must be won over so that he will not do us harm. This is the reasoning of a primitive, suspicious people in an implacable world where there is no escape when the tiger comes, or the snake strikes, or the storm breaks.

Where the helplessness of man, who has been unable to discover the origin of disease, is shown most clearly is in the field of medicine. Pain and Death demand the help of the witch doctor, of the man of supernatural powers able to cast the demon out of the

body. In the advertising section of the *Banner of Light*, official organ of the spiritualists of New England, advertisements like the following were found in 1868, when Mrs. Glover was already attempting to teach Christian Science, as Dr. Haggard points out in his book:

Clairvoyant doctors, giving magnetic and electric treatments, have recently opened an office on Quincy Avenue, in Quincy, Massachusetts, where they are healing patients with great success. Lodging and treatment at reasonable rates. Address: Quincy, Massachusetts.

Any one wishing to heal a patient can obtain from the undersigned instructions that will enable him to begin treatment by means of a scientific principle whose success surpasses all methods used to date. Even in the most stubborn cases success has been achieved without the need of medicine, electricity, physiology or hygiene. No money need be paid unless the method is learned. Write to Mrs. Mary B. Glover, Amesbury, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Mary Lewis, upon receipt of your autograph or a sample of your hair, will send you psychometric indications of your character, and will answer questions. Terms: \$1.00 and stamps.

There is really nothing more tempting than to take these secret paths, peopled by a thousand possible solutions, when by the light of day one sees only barriers and afflictions. Medieval man, who inspired Nicholas Berdyaev with so much enthusiasm when the latter wrote his treatises on the Middle Ages, was merely man ruled by the irresistible force of his environment. His desperate tears, his witches, his fantastic processions, his inevitable meetings with the devil, his life filled with miracles, slowly disappear as soon as man begins to tame natural forces, and succeeds in passing the lightning through a wire, in calming a headache with aspirin, in curing the colic, and in bringing children into the world without the pains of childbirth. The natural man, the man who can behave naturally, who lives longer, and who has lost his fear of the water and other natural elements, can treat himself to the luxury of not resorting to magic, except in special cases. Which does not mean to say that there is anyone alive who is above resorting to magic in certain crises of his life.

II. *The Magic of Nicolás Guillén*

Nicolás Guillén, in the most magic of his poetry, is half poet and half medicine man. The medicine man's powder is called *mayombe*. Lydia Cabrera, who has studied this subject, gives us a complete account of the Cuban medicine man. "The spell is cast," she says, "by giving powders, called *mayombe empolo*, which are mixed with food, dissolved in coffee, or are inhaled with a cigar or with tobacco." The spell is blown or is trod upon. A swelling, pain, or abrasion in the foot is attributed invariably to the work of a *morumba*, of a *kandangazo*. It is interesting to know that the spell can be broken by urinating on it, and that it can be picked up with the left hand. The medicine man captures the spirit of a corpse by taking possession of his bones; the spirit clings to the body as long as the remains last; and in these, particularly in the skull, is to be found the spiritual substance of the dead man: his intelligence. If you have one of the dead man's fingers, a piece of his skeleton, his soul will seek that fragment which represents the whole of his body. Hence, the medicine man will go to the cemetery and, sprinkling rum in the form of a cross on a grave, he will carry away the head; if the brains are still fresh, so much the better, for it is there—in the *Kiyumba*—that *Funbi* thinks things. Or he will carry away fingers, toes, ribs, or shin bones so that the spirit may run. It is better not to divulge the complete formula, for it is not intended to make here a manual that a neophyte can use to become a medicine man.

The example of Guillén in his *Song for killing a snake* is perfect. As everyone knows, it begins as follows:

Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!  
*The snake has eyes of glass;*  
*He wraps himself around a stick;*  
*With his eyes of glass, around a stick,*  
*With his eyes of glass.*  
*The snake walks without feet;*  
*The snake hides in the grass:*  
*Walking he hides in the grass,*  
*Walking without feet.*

Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!

Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!

Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!

We all remember the poem. We know that the snake can be pounded with these words until he is dead. A formula much like Guillén's was found in Venezuela by the Folklore Commission of Juan Liscano, as I have heard on a record that forms part of the collection kept in the Library of Congress at Washington.

Guillén reverts to the golden age of magic, as evidenced by the fact that his poems cannot be read without music. They are poems to be sung, and with a chorus. And they are not complete even if sung. They must be danced. And even sung and danced, they are incomplete. They need a bonfire, the smell of the woods, a gleam that flashes from the sweaty bodies of the Negroes.

Guillén himself is full of tricks, secrets, of cabalistic words that he does not confide to the ordinary reader. In his book, *El son entero* he goes so far as to suggest at the back of the book the music which should accompany his poems. But in his vocabulary he gives a series of magic words whose meaning he withholds. He solves the difficulty by saying: "*Mamatamba*: phonetism; *Quen-cuyere*: phonetism"; et cetera. What is to be said of phonetisms? There are the occult meanings that only the medicine men know—perhaps only the chief medicine man.

These things are known only by those who know them. We must turn to one of Lydia Cabrera's examples:

*El gangulero* who goes on Good Friday or on St. John's Day to a steep hill to cut the poles that he needs to erect his *Ganga* or to perform one of his rites, sometimes adds a chicken by way of an offering and lights a candle. He will climb the hill before sunrise; and while he greets the sun, he pours out the rum, fans the tobacco smoke, et cetera, singing like the old medicine man:

Casimba yéré

Casimbangé

*I left my house*

Casimbangé

*I left my country*

*I come to seek*

*Give me shade, Ceiba tree,*

*Give me shade,  
Give me shade, Cuaba pole  
Give me shade, Yuba pole  
Give me shade, Caja pole.*

It is clear that these are delicate functions, which are efficacious only when all the magic ceremonial is preserved. The Caribbean offers a blessed opportunity for research in this kind of studies.

### *III. The Negro Is About to Bewitch a Soldier*

In the Caribbean the Negro sharpens his gifts of magic from the day of his arrival at the Isles of dialect, hurricanes, rum, sharks, and white men. He must sharpen his gifts of magic because his insecurity has increased. In the heart of Africa he had to deal only with the tiger, the hyena, and a few other details which we know through the novels of Salgari. But suddenly he discovers a worse kind of wild beast, the white man, the slave hunter, the Christian, who seizes him, puts him in chains, brands him with a red hot iron, and sells him like a bag of bones. Thereafter his problem merely becomes one of defending himself against the white man, of bewitching him, of repeating to him his *Sensemaya*, his *Sensemaya*, until he charms him and puts him in his pocket.

Nicolás Guillén gazes from his sorcerer's lair at the enemies of man, and he finds soldiers. The soldier must be charmed. He must be made to fire to the rear. Not here, not here, for your Negro is here! He must be taught marksmanship, taught magic. Nicolás then begins to sing slowly to him, like singing to a spirit; he murmurs into his ear music such as he sings to the snake. Nicolás' poem is weighted with the technique of magic from the first syllable to the last:

*I don't know why you,  
Soldier, think that I hate you,  
for we are one,  
I  
You.  
You are poor, so am I;  
I am an outcast, so are you:  
Who told you, Soldier,  
That I hate you.*

*It hurts me that sometimes you,  
 Forget who I am  
 Counfound it, I am you,  
 As you are I.  
 But for nothing on earth  
 Do I hate you;  
 For we are one,  
 I,  
 You,  
 I don't know why you,  
 Soldier, think that I hate you.*

The efficacy of the primitive songs, of the secret societies, of Voodoo, invented and developed by the Negroes of the Caribbean, has been proved by history.

It is enough to recall the devil's chorus that the rebellious Negroes of Haiti sang when they tossed their French masters into a bonfire and challenged with their gleaming white teeth Napoleon himself. Or it suffices to remember the lodges, the fraternities, the societies of the *ñañigos*, admirably described by Don Fernando Ortiz.

Long before Nicolás Guillén's day, in 1877, the Negro, Candelario Obeso, published his *Song of the Montará*. It is subjoined in its entirety:

*This lonely life  
 That I lead here  
 With my woman and kids  
 And my dogs,  
 I would not exchange  
 For the life of the town.  
 I have no lack of tobacco nor food,  
 Of beef stew, and the wine  
 Is to my taste.  
 And the rum from my sugar cane  
 Is marvellous!  
 No one scares me.  
 The Chief of Police  
 And the Rural Guard  
 Live a long way off;  
 Of mosquitoes and snakes  
 I have no fear;*

*There is a bin for my wheat  
When I reap.  
There is a cure for all the animals,  
But there is no known cure for the Government;  
So I will not exchange  
What I have  
For the things that others have  
In town.*

Certainly. When Nicolás or Candelario are great poets besides being medicine men, their verses attain the magic charm of the best poetry.

# 19



## José Antonio Portuondo: CARIBBEAN LITERARY THEMES IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

*(Translated by Claire M. Fernández)*

### *I. The Literary Themes*

SOLUTION of the question posed by the literary themes of Spanish America has not yet been undertaken in a manner satisfactory to us. It is true that partial studies have been made concerning "the Indian" and "the Negro" in Ibero-American literature, "landscape" and "the bandit" in the Mexican, "the earthquake" in the Peruvian, "the jíbaro" in the Puerto Rican, and even "the moon" in the mulatto poetry of Cuba. But no systematic, scientific exploration has been attempted in general to determine which themes are the most important and most frequently used and, above all, what relation they bear to the conception of society and to the task facing the generation of those who have used them. For it is a fact that literary themes express the essential attitude of the writers, and, therefore, that of important portions of the people, toward the task that their times impose upon them.

It is well known that, in addition to constant themes in universal literature—love and death, to cite only the most obvious—there are others which characterize a literature and an epoch, such as "honor" in the Spanish theater of the Golden Age, regional themes such as "the gaucho," and recurrent themes, those tending to appear from time to time, as, for instance, "the Negro" in Hispanic literature. What factors decide the choice of certain themes in determined historical periods? Why, at a given moment, are they and no others fit vehicles of an express intention? What relation do the themes bear to the surrounding reality, and to what degree do they indicate



the attitude of the writer toward his environment? All these questions will some day have to be answered by whoever undertakes the scientific study of literary themes. At this time we wish only to outline a brief inquiry into certain dominant themes in the literature of the Caribbean area in the last fifty years as a means of clarifying the attitudes of literary men and of the people of that region toward the problems peculiar to the American Mediterranean.

In the past the peoples of the Caribbean, in spite of their geographical and historical unity, lived unknown to one another, and it is hardly a quarter of a century since they have become aware of their physical and cultural contiguity. While the United States, even during colonial times and with still greater perspicacity after securing independence, considered the Caribbean area as a unity, the colonies of Spain and of France first, and later the republics of Latin America, with their backs to the sea, ignored one another. Colombia and Venezuela, Mexico and Central America, and the Greater and Lesser Antilles were worlds apart and at times hostile, hardly aware of their coasts, with neither a merchant marine nor stable contacts with one another. Having attained independence, the newly formed nations found themselves involved in a long and tumultuous process of national adjustment which consumed the greater part of their creative energy. Each nation wished to have its frontiers well defined; each was engaged in separating itself from its neighbors rather than in drawing itself toward them; and the sea, that indisputable frontier, was a barrier, not a roadway. From 1885 to 1922, efforts to integrate a strong and stable Central American Union resulted in nothing more than a continuous and, at times, bloody succession of failures. It was not until 1939 that the peoples of the Caribbean convened to discuss their common problems in tacit recognition of their essential unity. In the third of the Inter-American Conferences of the Caribbean, which took place at Port-au-Prince in 1941, Mexico proposed the creation of an Inter-American Union of the Caribbean, but on one pretext or another the proposal was dismissed. The ships of Greater Colombia have been in operation for only a short time and the settling of old Cuban-Mexican conflicts over the application of fishing laws in the Gulf of Mexico is still more recent. In consequence of this absurd economic and political situation, the theme of

"the Caribbean," conceived as a unity, does not exist in our literature. There is not a poem or a novel of the Caribbean as a whole, and in this general poverty there stands out, as perhaps the only exception, the poem "Mare Nostrum," by the Puerto Rican poet, Luis Lloréns Torres, in whose verses are expressed the frustration and hope of our sea:

Mar que aún sientes el dolor del coloniaje,  
y colérico echas ajos de relampagos y truenos,  
cuando izadas en algunas de tus islas  
ves exóticas banderas pregonando  
que aún no eres nuestro mar.

The Caribbean still is not our sea; its colonial status, its diverse foreign flags, and its languages maintain the division despite geography. But the idea of unity persists. Starting with geography, it begins to assert itself by reason of the coincidence of interests and ideals which motivate a conscious cooperation of endeavors. This is already happening in the political and economic spheres and it is, happily, foreseen in literary themes.

## II. *Landscape*

The same Lloréns Torres who affirms bitterly in the face of colonial bondage that the Caribbean is not our sea, concludes in the same poem:

Pero lo eres.  
Nuestro, nuestro,  
desde el cráter adormido en Martinica  
a la cripta en Nicaragua donde duerme el ruiseñor;  
nuestro, nuestro,  
en el lujo de tus noches estrelladas,  
en las fuerzas de tu lluvia y tu ciclón,  
en el sol que te calienta,  
y en la hondura de tus aguas donde manda tu pez rey el tiburón;  
y lo eres, en los cables invisibles de tu Trópico de Cancer, conque  
amarras, de la andina cordillera, la tendida  
y ancha y larga cola azul de tu mantón.  
Y eres nuestro, Mare Nostrum:  
porque, a todos nuestros pueblos,  
para que oren por su paz y por su unión,  
les ofreces el rosario de tus islas,  
del que vuela en letanías la oración,

la oración que a Diosle reza el Nuevo Mundo,  
prostrnado ante la tumba de Colón.

This essential geographical unity can be seen in the coincidental treatment of the theme of landscape. At times it is all one region geographically, and, then again, Lloréns Torres sings to the Antilles and coincides in this theme with Nicolás Guillén; or it is the traveler who is conscious of it, and it is now the Venezuelan, Jacinto Fombona Pachano, who describes the dance of the "shores of the Caribbean," following the route of the Grace Line; or, contemplating between extreme ports, Havana and Veracruz, Alfonso Reyes gives us his vision of the Gulf of Mexico, emphasizing in verses of rhythmical keenness his "sympathies" and "differences." At other times unity is made apparent to the reader in the similarity of the descriptions. The *sea* is a theme little used by writers of the Caribbean. And it is not because poems do not exist in which the poets speak of themselves as being on the seacoast. Salvador Novo observes: "Our poetry, as Díaz Mirón unintentionally points out in his *Idilio*, develops at most

A tres leguas de un puerto bullente  
que a desbordes y grescas ánima . . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Referring to Veracruz but in words applicable to many other cities, Alfonso Reyes writes:

No: aquí la tierra triunfa y manda  
. . . . .  
la ciudad sólo abre hacia la costa  
sus puertas de servicio.

Colombia also, in large measure, turns her back to the sea, and only Germán Arciniegas among her writers seems to have been interested in the biography of the Caribbean. Venezuela looks out upon the sea from the admirable balcony of its Isla Margarita. From there Manuel Díaz Rodríguez was perhaps the first to attempt to paint the Caribbean, using his rich *modernista* palette. He still lends its colors to two more recent novels having as their subject the same region: *Cubagua*, by Enrique Bernardo Núñez,

<sup>1</sup> Salvador Novo, *Canto a Teresa*, Ediciones Fábulas, Mexico, 1934.

and *Dámaso Velázquez*, by Antonio Arráiz. The sea described with *modernista* luxuriance by the Venezuelan narrators is the same as that which the Cuban, Enrique Serpa, paints in *Contrabando* with more sober naturalist brushes.

The prodigal, tropical cornucopia of fish, of fruits, of vegetation, and of birds in which Arráiz delights is the same that appears in the verses of the Mexican, Carlos Pellicer, that dazzles in *Regreso al país natal*, by the Martinican, Aime Cessaïre, and that finds a Cuban echo in *La isla en peso* by Virgilio Piñera. It is easy to discern that the sea and landscape described by the Venezuelan writers, who complete a veritable Margaritan cycle—Enrique Bernardo Núñez, Antonio Arráiz, Pedro Rivero, Vicente Fuentes, et cetera—are the same that are depicted in the poetry and prose of the Haitian writers: Pierre Moraviah Morpeau, Jacques Roumain, and the Brothers Marcelin; the Puerto Ricans: Luis Lloréns Torres, the Brothers Luis, Vicente, and Gustave Palés Matos, and Enrique Laguerre; the Dominicans: Juan Bosch and Manuel de Cabral; and the Cubans: Serpa and Piñera. The landscape described by the Cuban, Carlos Enrique, in his novel *Tilín García*, is the same which serves as background for *El señor presidente*, by the Guatemalan writer, Miguel Angel Asturias, having been treated with both the artful brush strokes and the reflective delight which Valle Inclán had displayed before in *Tirano banderas* and in his Mexican sonata. The tropics offer the writer rhythm, color, odors, and tastes, the description of which delights artists so dissimilar as the Haitians, Duraciné Vaval and Emil Roumer, the Venezuelan, Arráiz, and the Puerto Rican, Luis Palés Matos. It gives him also his words:

¡ Ay, las hermosas palabras,  
que si se van,                   t  
que no se irán!

sings Carlos Pellicer in his poem to the Usumacinta. Poets and prose writers relish the succulent tropical words, some of them Indian, of strange resonance—*el Lakatún* and *el Lakanjá*; others, African, of profound, recurring sound!—*Mayombe*, *bombe*, *mayombé*!; many of clearly Spanish lineage, accommodated to a new grace: María Belén Chacón, Sacramento Chávez, Ignacio la O, and others that, penetrating and superimposing themselves in

audacious linguistic foreshortening, merge and break apart to create the *jitanjáfora*<sup>2</sup> whose meaning carries only a dramatic or ironical intention aided by rhythm, from the "verdehálago" cult of the Cuban, Mariano Brull, to the cannibalistic "ñam-ñam" of Luis Palés Matos. The Caribbean intoxicates itself with rhythm and color throughout its territory, rhythm and color which are often the sole themes of poetry and of prose.

On occasion, however, this orgy provokes an ironic reaction in some writers who seem to mock at the showy landscape, using it as a background to bring into high relief the daily mediocrity. This method was used by the Colombian, Luis Carlos López, followed by the Costa Rican, Asdrúbal Villalobos, and, after their own fashion, by the Guatemalan, Rafael Arévalo Martínez, and the Cuban, José Z. Tallet. In all the Caribbean countries there are poets who resist the landscape and cause to pass through a stylizing intellect the images which seek to invade their sensibility in torrents. We have just mentioned Mariano Brull, who chisels petals of his crystalline roses, indifferent to the carnal sensuality of tropical orchids. Let us now remember Eugenio Florit, whose *Trópico* is no less faithfully represented because it is revealed in quiet, graceful, Gongoristic *décimas*:

Mar, con el oro metido  
por decorar tus arenas;  
ilusión de ser apenas  
por dardos estremecido.  
Viven en cálido nido  
aves de tu luz, inquietas  
por un juego de saetas  
ilusionadas de cielo,  
profundas en el desvelo  
de llevar muertes secretas.

The poets who came after Florit and the Mexican, José Gorostiza, and who were influenced by them, had a short period of separation from, and repudiation of, the tropical theme, although some of them, like Virgilio Piñera, treated it with notable success. For them, all that external wealth was pure illusion of the senses, as alien to their souls as, in truth, the Caribbean is politically and

<sup>2</sup> See Alfonso Reyes, "Las jitanjáforas" in *La experiencia literaria*, Losada, Buenos Aires, 1942.

economically alien to us. However, those of more keen sensibility have turned their eyes to the lasting illusion and have found in it the roots of their song and the reason for their existence. The most recent book of the young Cuban poet, Cintio Vitier, shows a happy return to the vernacular themes, and one of the finest and most gentle voices of the Caribbean, Francisco Matos Paoli, combines in the verses of his *Canto a Puerto Rico* the symbols and the refined intellectualism of the new poetry with the vigor which exalts the poetry of Luis Lloréns Torres:

Y el Mar Caribe indio, padrenuestro.  
 Canoas como espejos sigilosos  
 hacen la ronda de la noche vieja  
 en plata, en oro, en soledad, en cauce  
 de golondrinas henchidas por la luz.  
 Quietud de miel bajo el azul añil  
 murmullo de las bramas enlunadas,  
 cerebro de la onda enardecida  
 pronta a estallar, a derribar estrellas  
 en la virginea clave de los peces,  
 pronta al sollozo de las savias madres,  
 sacerdotal de risas tan furtivas.

. . . . .  
 ¡Padre Nuestro, Caribe, Padre Nuestro!  
 Solar de golondrinas  
 y razón de las aves que se van,  
 soltando su recimo acendrado de islas  
 en el regazo boreal de Dios.

### III. The Men

The men of the Caribbean are present, also, as themes in its literature. "The Indian" is the constant theme of Mexico and of Central America.<sup>3</sup> He fills with his presence *La tierra de faisán y del venado* by Antonio Mediz Bolio, constitutes the *Héroes mayas* of Ermilo Abreu Gómez, and appears in the *Leyendas de Guatemala* by Miguel Ángel Asturias and the contemporaneous narratives of the Mayan region in which Juan de la Cabada delves into the stories and the sufferings of the exploited Indians. Reality

<sup>3</sup> Aida Cometta Manzoni, *El indio en la poesía de la América española*, Buenos Aires, 1939.

and legend intertwine around the Indian like the tightly creeping vines of the jungle that guard dead cities. There is the deep, throbbing sound of underground water, of hushed sorrow, of a dormant volcano. The Indian of those narratives and poems is sad.

"The Negro," in contrast, is piquancy and spontaneous laughter: in the verses of Luis Palés Matos; in many of the Cubans, Nicolás Guillén and Emilio Ballagas; in those of the Dominicans, Tomás Hernández Franco and Manuel del Cabral; in those of the Panamanian, Demetrio Korsi; the Venezuelan, Manuel Rodríguez Cárdenas; and the Colombian, Jorge Artel. "The Negro" is present also, happy or enraged, in the story and the novel: in *Ecue Yamba-O*, by Alejo Carpentier; in *Pobre negro*, by Rómulo Gallegos; in *Pedro Blanco, el negrero*, and in the stories of Lino Novás Calvo, and in the cosmogonic and theogonic accounts of the *yorubas* of Cuba related by Lidia Cabrera and Rómulo Lachatañeré. The Negro poetry movement, initiated around 1925 in Puerto Rico by Luis Palés Matos, gained in maturity and scope beginning in 1930 with the poems of Nicolás Guillén. In them the Negro affirms his existence in full consciousness of his significance in the American historical and cultural process.

Aquí estamos

. . . . .

Traemos

nuestro rasgo al perfil definitivo de América.

Guillén, without renouncing the laughter, the color, and the rhythm, vigorously and concisely denounces discrimination against his race, and gives his song universal meaning. In his book entitled *West Indies, Ltd.*, which appeared in 1934, he announced, beginning with the title, a political attitude, and his verses express the bitterness of all who see their lands oppressed by foreign hands.

¡West Indies! ¡West Indies! ¡West Indies!

Éste es el pueblo hirsuto

de cobre, multicéfalo, donde la vida rept  
con el lodo seco cuarteado en la piel.

Éste es el presidio

donde cada hombre tiene atados los pies.

Ésta es la grotesca sede de *companies y trusts*.

Aquí están el lago de asfalto, las minas de hierro,

las plantaciones de café,  
 los *port docks*, los *ferry boats*, los *ten cents*. . . .  
 Éste es el pueblo del *all right*,  
 donde todo se encuentra muy mal;  
 éste el pueblo del *very well*,  
 donde nadie está bien.

The later works of Guillén, *Cantos para soldados y sones para turistas* (1937), and *El son entero* (1947), add to the range of his protest; they penetrate so deeply that they touch the sad heart of contemporary man. This passing from the picturesque to the essential places Guillén in the category of the most important poetical voice in the Caribbean, and one of the first of our language. The complete gamut, from the babbling of the elementary language and that of the *jitanjáfora* to the polished and learned strophe of modernism and of pure poetry, he puts at the service of his revised conception of the world. This is made evident in his admirable *Elegía a Jacques Roumain en el cielo de Haití* (1948), which, from the little sonnet in heptasyllables with which it commences to the antiphonal stanza to be intoned in chorus which closes it, is all one splendid synthesis of poetic learning and passion for justice.

The past, conquered in other parts of the world, is the stern present still for the peasants of the Caribbean: the *jibaros* in Puerto Rico,<sup>4</sup> the *guajiros* in Cuba, serfs everywhere who live and die on the earth without possessing it. Unity in treatment of the theme is dramatically brought into high relief when one reads the stories of the Dominican, Juan Bosch, or of the Cubans, Luis Felipe Rodríguez and Carlos Montenegro, and compares them with the peasant chronicles of Caribbean Mexico, Central America, and coastal and insular Venezuela. In all, against an identical curtain of tropical background, luxuriant sometimes, at other times parched by the effects of sun, drought, and taxes, men spend themselves laboring on soil which does not belong to them and drag themselves about with their spirits broken or burning with rancor, like phantoms shaken by the storms of the Caribbean. In some cases,

<sup>4</sup> Antonio S. Pedreira, "La actualidad del jíbaro," *Puerto Rico*, 1935, Año I, núm. 2, pp. 113-125; and Ana Margarita Silva, *El jíbaro en la literatura de Puerto Rico, comparado con el campesino de España e Hispanoamérica*, Edición de la Autora, Mexico, 1945.



as in the stories appearing in *Marcos Antilla*, by Luis Felipe Rodríguez, the protest makes use of the irony of the *guajiro* to denounce the exploitation of the "Cubanacan Sugar Company," with its "Mr. Norton," who comes to them from the outside, and its native Fica Larrachea.

The "Mr. Norton" of Luis Felipe Rodríguez is one more version of the American in our lands who is also a constant theme in Caribbean literature. He is not usually painted as sympathetic, but as arrogant and contemptuous, disdainful toward conquered peoples. Nevertheless, beginning with 1933, and as a consequence of the "Good Neighbor" policy of President Roosevelt, honest and sympathetic North Americans began to appear. In the novels of Rómulo Gallegos, to cite an eminent example, the picture of the American follows a clear and eloquent course from the "Mr. Builder" of *La Trepadora* (1925) and "Mr. Danger" of *Doña Bárbara* (1929), both frightened and brutal exploiters, to "Mr. Davenport," of *Canaúma* (1935) rooted affectionately in Venezuelan soil, and culminating with "Mr. Hardman" of *Sobre la misma tierra* (1944), generous and idealistic, who makes an effort to reconcile the just demands of the Venezuelan workers with the interests of the companies which exploit the petroleum of Maracaibo Lake.<sup>5</sup>

#### IV. Imperialism

Imperialism is the literary theme in the treatment of which all the peoples of the Caribbean coincide. It may be said that it determines forcibly the growing expression of their sense of unity: it is the danger which every moment brings them together and provokes clamorous and unanimous reaction. It is, in its turn, the source of numerous sub-themes which express the reaction of the writer toward diverse local aspects of the common problem. It is possible to follow the evolution of the theme and of the sub-themes through the stages indicated by Professor W. H. Callcott in the course of the Caribbean policy of the United States during the years 1890 to 1920,<sup>6</sup> which he groups in the following periods:

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Anson C. Piper, "El yanquí en las novelas de Rómulo Gallegos," *Hispania*, XXXIII (nov., 1950), pp. 338-341.

<sup>6</sup> Wilfred Hardy Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States, 1890-1920*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1942.

(1) "Imperialism Through War" (1890-1899); (2) "Imperialism Via Diplomacy" (1899-1905); (3) "Reaction: Masterful Cooperation" (1905-1908); (4) "Dollar Diplomacy" (1908-1913); and (5) "Paternal Despotism" (1913-1920).

In the first period, which Callcott calls "Imperialism Through War," the Spanish-Cuban-American War and the subsequent military occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico provoked more than one romantic explosion among the Antillean writers. *The flag* was the poetic sub-theme which served the Cubans, Bonifacio Byrne and Enrique Hernández Miyares, and the Puerto Rican, José de Diego, to express their longing for absolute independence. But the greatest and most illustrious anti-imperialist clamor was produced in the period following, and was caused by the separation of Panama and by the "Big Stick" policy of President Theodore Roosevelt—the *Ode to Roosevelt* of Rubén Darío. Nevertheless, when in 1906 at the Third Pan-American Conference at Rio de Janeiro, Elihu Root proposed his conciliatory policy of cooperation—the third period, according to Callcott—Darío wrote his *Salutación al águila* in recognition of the attitude enunciated by the Secretary of State of the United States.

During the period that Callcott designates as that of "Dollar Diplomacy" (1908-1913), there took place the military occupation of Nicaragua (1909), and the imposition of Adolfo Díaz as president of that country from 1911 to 1916. But the most important event occurred in 1910 with the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, which was to engender a rich literature, a small part of which had to do with the Caribbean, and which was represented, among other works, by the novels of José Mancisidor. The revolution spread its inquietude to all the Caribbean countries, and in all of them there appeared essays and poems of diverse quality concerning their men and their most notable achievements. It stimulated, moreover, the rebellious tone which characterized a good part of the following periods.

From 1913 to 1920, in the period which Callcott calls that of "Paternal Despotism," there occurred the attack on Veracruz in 1914 and, in the same year, the signing of the Bryan-Chamorra Treaty; in 1915, the occupation of Haiti, which was to last until 1934; in 1916, the military occupation of Santo Domingo, which was concluded in 1924, and in 1918, a new disembarkation of

troops in Panama. The feeling of unity of the Antilles and of the Caribbean in general moved in step with these happenings, growing stronger among the writers. As a manifestation of the sentiment, in 1913 the *Revista de las Antillas* came into being in Puerto Rico, founded by Luis Lloréns Torres, and, at the end of the period, in 1920, the literary review, *El Repertorio Americano*, appeared. It has since been maintained by Don Joaquín García Monge, of Costa Rica, as a tribunal for free thought in the face of storms and floods of every description.

At the beginning of 1920, affirms Professor Callcott, "new responsibilities, new mediums of communication, and new international complications broadened the program of Washington to the point of giving it true hemispheric significance, but even so, the Caribbean was to remain as a strategic unity in the foreign policy of the United States." The literary themes continued to reveal, meanwhile, a progressive abandonment of *modernista* evasion and a growing denunciation of the local conflicts lighted daily by the flames of the Mexican Revolution. In 1926 the Cuban poet, Agustín Acosta, who, with Rubenian squeamishness, had previously persisted in his scant sympathy with the masses and with politics, sang, in his poem *La zafra*, of the bitterness of the land handed over to foreign companies which exploit sugar. Keener and more generous was to be the idealistic posing of the problem of Cuba in the novel *Coaybay*, by José Antonio Ramos, who, in the best of his dramas, *Tembladera*, also voiced his protest at the surrender of the land to the foreigner.

The new tenor inspired by the Mexican Revolution appears in the novels in which the Nicaraguan, Hernán Robleto, pictures his country as occupied and narrates the struggles of Augusto César Sandino. Sandino was to become, between 1926 and 1930, a literary theme which was used not only by Robleto, but also by his countryman, Antenor Sandino Hernández; by the Venezuelan, Gonzalo Carnevali; and by many others. Carnevali links the assassination of Sandino with the mercenary Pan-Americanism of Chamorro and Juan Vicente Gómez.

Ya las prensas asociadas,  
o unidas, que da lo mismo,  
no han de tener que llamarlos  
ni a él ni a los suyos, bandidos;

y los Chamorros de América  
o los Gómez—da lo mismo,  
podrán forjar mas sin trabas  
sus panamericanismos.

Todo porque en Nicaragua  
y mataron a Sandino.

Then the anonymous heroes of the struggle against anti-imperialism appear as literary themes, and both poets and prose writers profited by the popular muse. The tone of accusation and protest is, at times, violent, but at other times it becomes moderate and even slyly humorous. This is especially true among the writers of the Antilles, who mock at the tourist or sing bitterly to his face, as does the character José Ramón Cantaliso by Nicolás Guillén:

No me paguen porque cante  
lo que no les cantaré;  
ahora tendrán que escucharme  
todo lo que antes callé.  
¿Quién los llamó?  
Gasten su plata,  
Beban su alcohol,  
comprende un güiro,  
pero a mí no,  
pero a mí no,  
pero a mí no.

The "Good Neighbor" policy of President Roosevelt proceeded to correct the errors of the previous policies, and in 1933 the United States forces were withdrawn from Nicaragua; in 1934 the Platt Amendment, which limited the political independence of Cuba, was abrogated; and in 1936 the United States renounced its right to intervene in the internal affairs of Panama. The result of this cordial policy was to enlist the efforts of the various Caribbean countries in the attainment of understanding and cooperation among them. In 1939 there took place in Havana the first Inter-American Conference of the Caribbean, and this was succeeded by others in various cities of the Antilles. Plans were made for economic unification and innumerable speeches were delivered. In the novels of Rómulo Gallegos, the American was delineated with more understanding, and Hernán Robleto was able to picture, without apparent inverisimilitude, a Marine who, at the end of

the fighting, returns to the mountains of Nicaragua in search of the simple peasant girl whom he had seduced, in order to marry her.

But now, since the conflict in Spain, after a world war of enormous proportions, whose cost must still be weighed, and on the threshold of another which in gigantic strides is losing its alleged "coldness," the literature of our countries resumes its tone of bitterness. Poets and novelists continue painting the sadness and bitterness which has never left the Caribbean. The literary themes continue to be, as before, an orgy of rhythm and of color as far as landscape is concerned, and pain and protest among men of all races who hunger and thirst for justice on land sold to some foreign enterprise.

#### *V. Envoy*

It is well to remember: literary themes express the essential attitude of writers and therefore of important portions of their respective peoples in the light of problems which their circumstances impose on them. To heed the recurrence of those themes is as valuable as it is to listen to the voice of the people which expresses itself through the mouths of their men of letters. A novel and a poem, with fewer figures and much less falsified abstraction, tell the careful listener more than any number of statistics. Let him who should and can listen, listen. It is the sole object of these pages to call attention to the cry of a handful of peoples who grow restless beneath the sun and in the midst of the high winds on the shores of the Caribbean.

.



## *Appendix*





**DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE ON  
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UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA,  
DECEMBER 7-9, 1950**

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